

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.



**You Are Special
Leader's Bible Study Guide
and Bible Study Workbook**

(A companion to the YAS Master Curriculum Guide)

"You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose."

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Foreword

Welcome to You Are Special (YAS)! If you've experienced our YAS Master Curriculum Guide, then you already know our passion for imparting this simple message to everyone we can. You, the reader, are special! What's more, this fact is not at all diminished by the reality that in God's heart everyone else is special, too. There's more than enough of God's love to go around. Whether you are a toddler who wants to be hugged or an elderly person who fears being forgotten, everyone everywhere needs to hear that they are wanted and have a unique purpose. Because the cry is so universal, people have embraced You Are Special all across China, and we are thrilled that the message is spreading.

While the Master Curriculum Guide plants the "seed" message, the Bible Study goes deeper and explores the bases for that profound truth. Not all world views lead to the same conclusion about the intrinsic value of human beings, but how happy we are to present in this study the underlying Biblical foundations of our "specialness". Some may be rightfully concerned that we are promoting a "self esteem" message, reinforcing self-promotion that is contrary to the Cross. We are not. That is why we started the Bible Study with Lesson 0, backing up from the first MCG lesson to set a firm foundation going forward based on the reality that God is the one whom we should esteem. There is no "self esteem" in the Bible.

However, having said that, it is clear that throughout the Bible God demonstrates His love for people as His image bearers, whether sinners or saints. What's more, He has deemed us worthy of the ultimate gift that saves us from a sinful and fallen world. He gave His one and only Son, Jesus, who sacrificed his life as atonement for all sin. When we receive this reality by faith, we enter into His New Covenant as new creations and become His Kingdom ambassadors and disseminators. Clearly, our value and purpose are written into every line of the Bible. As believers, we have so much to live for and so much good news to share with others.

The Master Curriculum Guide imparts the simple seed message that "you are special!" However, we believe that the Bible Study will deepen that reality in each participant, making them more secure in their faith and better able to impart that life-changing truth to others.

Until all the world sings,
New Song 2017

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

New Song Programs Overview

Master Curriculum Overview	You Are Special (YAS)	Be Yourself! (BY!)	You Are Mine (YAM)
Topics	Self-worth and resisting labels	Identity and combatting negative peer pressure	Our importance, materialism, and proper stewardship
Enduring Understanding (main take-away for end-user)	You are special - unique, important, created for a purpose!	Embrace whom you are uniquely created to be!	You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.
Companion book by Max Lucado (bilingual edition)	<u>You Are Special</u>	<u>If Only I Had a Green Nose</u>	<u>You Are Mine</u>
Targeted Grade/Ages*	5 th grade (expanded use to 8-12 year olds)	6 th grade (expanded use to 12-14 year olds)	7 th grade (expanded use to 14-16 year olds)
Lesson Times* (for end-user)	School Day Curriculum (SDC) of 8, 1-hour lessons; Saturday Curriculum (SC) of 4, 2-hour lessons	5, 1.5 hour lessons	5, 1.5 hour lessons and 1-1.5 hours of extended learning
Biblical Resources by New Song (for use in “open” settings)	YAS Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth	BY! Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth	YAM Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All programs work as seed planting with unbelievers.• All programs work as a discipleship tools when in coordination with Bible Study.• YAS is foundational to BY! and YAM but they can be implemented as “stand-alones”.• Because of the depth and nature of BY!/YAM, they require more time for lesson exploration and can be less versatile.		
*Please note that lesson times and age ranges are adaptable			

New Song Programs Biblical Framework

This is basic foundation on which we base all New Song curricula and Bible studies.

- 1) Everyone is special.
- 2) Everyone is special because they are made by God.
- 3) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God.
- 4) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that they can be secure in God.
- 5) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that through Christ they can be secure in God and share this message with others.

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You Are Special (YAS)

Overview

Publisher's Description of You Are Special by Max Lucado:

"Every day Wemmicks do the same thing: either stick gold stars or gray dots on one another. The pretty and talented ones always get stars. Others, though, who can do little or who have chipped paint, get ugly dots. Kids will love seeing how Eli the woodcarver helps Punchinello understand how special he is--dots and all. Parents will appreciate the message this story sends to kids: that regardless of what the world thinks, they are precious in God's sight."

Enduring Understanding:

You are special - unique, important, created for a purpose!

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 0

The participant will see the relationship between esteeming God and understanding his/her self-worth as well as hear the salvation message.

Key Scripture: Psalm 96:2

Lesson 1

The participant will state the theme of the book as "you are special".

Key Scripture: 1 John 4:8b

Lesson 2

The participant will define "special."

Key Scripture: Genesis 1:26

Lesson 3

The participant will recognize his/herself and others as special through acknowledging similarities and appreciating differences.

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7b

Lesson 4

The participant will know they are special by identifying and explaining traits that show that they were made that way.

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

Lesson 5

The participant will explain the symbolism of stars and dots.

Key Scripture: Matthew 7:1

Lesson 6

The participant will understand that it is a choice to accept stars and dots, and the best choice is to accept neither.

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18

Lesson 7

The participant will demonstrate understanding of the importance of sharing the good news of the YAS message by helping others know they are special.

Key Scripture: Romans 10:14

Lesson 8

The participant will celebrate his/her specialness and the specialness of others.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:10

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Be Yourself! (BY!)

Overview

Publisher's Description of If Only I Had a Green Nose by Max Lucado:

"Just like Punchinello, we all want to fit in. To be accepted by the crowd. But at times that may mean we either have to look and act like others, or risk being rejected. Punchinello's hard-earned lesson shows us how important it is to be who we were created to be, and why that matters. So, let this wonderful tale help you remember two things: that you were made unique for a reason, and that there is one who will always help you be you--wonderfully you."

Enduring Understanding:

Embrace whom you are uniquely created to be.

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 1

The participant will read and discuss If Only I Had a Green Nose by Max Lucado, be introduced to the theme of the Be Yourself! program, and learn to recognize their own uniqueness and that of others.

Key Scripture: Psalm 139: 13-16

Lesson 2

The participant will define "peer pressure" and identify types of positive and negative peer pressure.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:2

Lesson 3

The participant will identify reasons he/she might give in to negative pressures as well as become aware of tricks of advertisers.

Key Scripture: 1 John 2:15-17

Lesson 4

The participant will examine the negative consequences of giving in to peer pressure.

Key Scripture: Galatians 6:7

Lesson 5

The participant will practice ways to resist negative peer pressure and personally apply concepts of Be Yourself!

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13

Bonus Bible Study Lesson

The participant will explore the difference between being a "Lover of Self" and "Loving Yourself."

Key Scripture: Matthew 22:39

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You Are Mine (YAM)

Overview

Publisher's Description of You Are Mine by Max Lucado:

"It's a new day in Wemmicksville for the enchanting wooden people, and there's a new problem for the little Wemmick named Punchinello. The Wemmicks compete with each other to collect the most--and the nicest--boxes and balls in order to appear more "important" than others, which means that, once again, there is havoc in the village. And once again, Punchinello is caught in the middle. But in the end, there's a message that kids need and parents will love: God's children are loved because He made them. They do not have to collect "things" to compete for status in His eyes. With the warm illustrations of artist Sergio Martinez, this new sequel to the phenomenal bestseller You Are Special is sure to become a classic in its own right."

Enduring Understanding:

You are important, not because of what you have, but because of who(se) you are.

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 0

The Participant will hear a clear presentation of the gospel message.

Essential Question: How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-13

Lesson 1

The participant will be introduced to the theme of the You Are Mine program.

Essential Question: Is wanting wrong?

Key Scripture: Matthew 6:21

Lesson 2

The participant will examine the notion of success and the price he/she is willing to pay to feel important.

Essential Question: When is the cost of success too high?

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:28

Lesson 3

The participant will determine if their actions reflect their core values.

Essential Question: What defines you?

Key Scripture: Hebrews 10:14

Lesson 4

The participant will explore generosity and its relationship to happiness.

Essential Question: Am I a bucket or a pipe?

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:24

Lesson 5

The participant will define "stewardship" and examine what it means to properly steward their time, talent, and material resources.

Essential Question: What is proper stewardship?

Key Scripture: Psalm 24:1

Extended Learning

The participant will consider the impact of consumerism.

Essential Question: How can I make a difference?

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

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Introduction to Use

This YAS Leader's Bible Study correlates to the **You Are Special (YAS) Master Curriculum Guide** and is intended for children 10-12 years old. However, broader age groups can benefit from this material so long as the instructor can share in an age-appropriate fashion. Each Bible Study lesson is about 1.5 hours and includes portions of the MCG that may have been modified to convey the Biblical perspective except for Lesson 0 which can only be found in the Bible Study. Lesson 0 should be understood as a non-negotiable precursor to the subsequent lessons because it outlines the starting point for all Christian learning and growth, the provision of Jesus through the Cross.

It is not always feasible or practical to use the full MCG and the Bible Study together. Other options can be:

Alternative Option 1: Use the Master Curriculum Guide only and have participants memorize the lessons' Key Scriptures in order to build the Biblical foundation for each lesson. However, **Lesson 0 is a non-negotiable** precursor for all believers. It can't be stressed enough that every leader should read through the entire Bible Study before implementing the Master Curriculum in order to grasp the Biblical basis for each lesson.

Alternative Option 2: Use Bible Study only without full implementation of MCG. The Bible Study incorporates portions from the MCG. However, the Bible Study cannot be implemented without knowledge of some of the main concepts and lessons in the MCG. These lessons should be included where indicated with an asterisk* and in bold. It is recommended that the instructor read through the entire MCG before doing the Bible Study.

Note: A companion YAS Bible Study Workbook has been created that allows participants to complete the exercises in a personal notebook. Handouts for classroom use can be found in the Appendix for those not using the YAM Bible Study Workbook. They can be copied from the printed curriculum guide or from the digital version. If printing the YAM Bible Study Workbook is impractical, participants can do the exercises in a regular notebook with some simple instruction from the leader.

Note: Please be sure to read through the all the lessons in advance and prepare all materials ahead of time.

*******SPECIAL NOTE*******

An important part of the YAS message is to give each participant his or her own copy of the book, You Are Special. See the end of Lesson 1 on how this should be done. If the book cannot be distributed to everyone at the end of Lesson 1, be sure to let the participants know that everyone will receive a copy. Leader must make certain that books are handed out in the recommended manner as soon as possible.

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You Are Special (YAS) Leader's Bible Study Guide

(A companion to the YAS Master Curriculum Guide)

"

"You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose."

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 0

Objective: The participant will see the relationship between esteeming God and understanding his/her self-worth as well as hear the salvation message.

Key Scripture:

Psalm 96:2: *Sing to the LORD, praise his name; tell of his salvation day after day.*

Materials:

- **Participant's Workbook and Bible**

Bible Study (60 min.):

On the board leader writes the following as students write in their Workbook:

"High self-esteem"

"Low self-esteem"

Discussion:

The leader will ask the following questions:

"Have you ever heard any of these words?"

"Do you know what they mean?"

The leader will further explain, "Today we are starting a Bible study about you being "special". Some people might think this study would be about building self-esteem, but the Bible doesn't actually teach about self-esteem. It does, however, have a lot to say about esteeming God! Only when you esteem God and understand His great worth are you able to properly understand your self worth."

The leader asks, "For what do we esteem God?" The leader answers this by stating the following:

- 1) For who He is
- 2) For the gifts He gives

The leader asks participants what are some of their favorite qualities about who God is and instructs them to list some of them in their Workbook.

Participants write out in their Workbook 2 Samuel 7:22:

How great you are, Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

I. Esteeming God for Who He is

Leader should prepare ahead of time slips of paper with the following paired qualities of God along with the Scripture verses. Students are paired and leader has pairs volunteer to randomly pick one of the slips of paper. They act out the two God's qualities on their slip while the class guesses. Once guessed, the actors read the verses. After each pair is guessed, the leader will follow up with a brief explanation.

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Lion/Lamb (Rev. 5:5; John 1:29)

The leader can explain that God is both the victorious Lion, able to devour His foes, and He is the gentle lamb who, without resistance, gave His life in sacrifice for all.

Judge/Justifier (Psalm 50:6; Rom. 5:9)

The leader can explain how God is like a judge that assigns a punishment for a convicted criminal and then takes on the punishment himself! Leader asks, "Can you imagine a judge paying the fine of a criminal that was convicted in his courtroom? So it is with our sin. Christ paid for our sins in full."

King/Servant (Psalm 47:7; Mark 10:45a)

The leader can explain that a King has great power, privilege, and is served by his people. However, God also chooses to serve us as an example of true humility and love.

Best Dad ever/Best Friend ever (1 John 3:1; John 15:15)

The leader can explain that while God is our Heavenly Father, deserving respect and obedience, He also calls us His friend.

Once this exercise is completed, the participants should take time to draw the pairs that were just acted out and include the Scripture verses in their Workbook.

II. Esteeming God for the Gifts He Gives

In a large group discussion, the leader will ask participants what are some of their favorite gifts God has given them (*i.e., friends, family, house, food to eat, a new bike, etc.*).

Participants should write out in their Workbook **James 1:17:**

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

The leader will state, "Those are all good gifts, and we thank God for them. Now, let's talk about the greatest gift of all...the gift of **salvation.**"

The leader asks, "Why do you think salvation is the greatest?" (Participants will be allowed time to answer.)

Leader instructs participants to highlight these two reasons from Scripture: (Leader refers participants to their Workbook.)

1. No other gift can compare! (Participants write out **Philippians 3:8.**)
2. It's a gift you get to enjoy now and for all eternity! (Participants write out Ephesians **1:13-14.**)

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Leader explains, "So many people think salvation is nothing more than a **ticket** to heaven. If that's true, then what enjoyment would there be in the here and now? It would kind of be like getting a hongbao (gift envelope) that your mom said you couldn't open until you were 76 years old. Where is the joy in that? It's true that heaven will be more amazing than anything we can imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9), but there is a lot to enjoy about salvation the very moment you put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins."

The leader continues, "Imagine you are given a red envelope full of tickets." (Leader gives each participant a red pocket with the "salvation tickets" from the handout - see Appendix.) "Now let's take a look at what's inside your envelope. Read the tickets and all the wonderful things salvation provides. Yes, one of the "salvation tickets" is for heaven, but the others are for all Christians to enjoy here and now."

Leader further explains, "It's true that some parts of salvation take time and energy to enjoy. Could a toddler as well as a computer engineer enjoy an iPad? Sure, just at different degrees of sophistication. In a similar way, mature believers as well as brand new Christians have access to all aspects of the great gift of salvation."

Once participants have read through the tickets, the leader should have them carefully and neatly paste the tickets in their Workbook making sure that the glue doesn't cause the Workbook pages to stick together. When completed, the leader proceeds with the lesson.

Leader states, "No one mentioned math as one of his or her favorite gifts from God. ☺ Math is actually a fascinating gift from God, and we are going to end our lesson learning the best math equation of all time." Leader will write the following on the board:

SALVATION EQUATION

FAITH in the finished work of Christ + NOTHING = SALVATION

Just like in this math equation: **10 + 0 = 10**

Leader asks participants what happens if they substitute another number for zero. The participants should see that the equation no longer works, and the only numeral value that fits the equation is zero.

The leader will explain that the same is true with the Salvation Equation. Good works, attending church, tithing, Bible reading, etc. are all wonderful activities. However, they don't contribute to salvation and cannot be added to the equation. Salvation is entirely based on Faith in the finished work of Christ.

Participants should write the Salvation Equation in their Workbook as well as the numerical equation.

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Leader will tell participants, "If you have put your faith in the finished work of Christ, you are about to enjoy an incredible journey learning about how special you are! God created all people special, but only the Christian can truly understand and experience the full measure of their self worth."

Leader continues, "If you are unsure about your salvation please let your Bible Study leader know. S/he would be delighted to not only teach you about how special you are, but to also lead you into an everlasting relationship with Jesus." (Leader should take this activity time to talk and pray with any student seeking to know more about salvation.)

Matching Exercise:

Leader shows participants the five statements of the "You Are Special" Program Biblical Framework (listed below). Participants should look up the verses on the right-hand side and draw a line to the matching statement on the left:

Everyone is special.	Romans 10:14-15
Everyone is special because they are made by God.	1 John 4:10
Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God.	Genesis 1:26-27
Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that they can be secure in God.	Psalms 139:13-24
Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that they can be secure in God and share this message with others.	John 10:28-29

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In Closing: Leader tells participants that esteeming God for who He is and what He has done for them is the best place to start in order to understand self-worth. Salvation is the greatest gift He gives and affirms the great worth of all people. The Bible has a lot to say about one's worth, and leader will explain to participants that in this Bible study they are going to have an incredibly memorable time learning that they are special!

Leader closes with a prayer.

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<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN (Philippians 3:20a)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>	<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>POWER OVER SIN (Romans 6:11)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>
<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Galatians 5:22-23)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>	<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1 John 1:3b)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>
<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>EFFECTIVE PRAYER (James 5:16b)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>	<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (1 Corinthians 2:12)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>
<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>1 NEW CREATION (2 Corinthians 5:17)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>	<p>The bearer of this ticket is entitled to:</p> <p>1 LOVING HEART (Ezekiel 36:26)</p> <p><i>To redeem follow these steps: through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.</i></p>

Lesson 1

MCG Objective: The participant will state the theme of the book as "You are special".

Key Scripture: 1 John 4:8b *God is love.*

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- ***YAS MCG**

Opening Activity (*See MCG Anticipatory Set) (10 min.): Leader will open the session by giving small group members the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other. For instance, each person can share their name, their hometown, and a favorite place. **OR**, the YAS Master Curriculum Manual suggests a **"Stand Up, Sit Down"** activity. The leader gives commands such as, "If you have a brother or sister, please stand up." Then, the leader tells everyone to sit back down again. Other commands following the same pattern should be given for a few minutes (i.e., If you are from Yunnan, please stand up; if your favorite holiday is Spring Festival; if you like to play badminton; if you're happy today, etc.). The leader should participate in this activity by standing up and sitting down after commands as well. This activity sets the tone for a relaxed and fun atmosphere allowing for more receptivity to the message.

Learning (*See MCG Guided Practice) (25 min): The leader will read the book, being sure to do so with energy and continuing to engage participants by showing them the illustrations as it's read. When finished, participants are asked how they liked the book, what they think about Punchinello, etc. The leader should not try to correct answers but just listen to their thoughts. Next, story elements are reviewed to ensure the participants have understood (i.e., who are the main characters? What is the setting? What did Punchinello learn? Who is Eli?). The leader should correct the answers to these comprehension questions. The leader will continue by asking the following questions without correcting responses:

- Did you like the story? What part of the story was most moving for you? Why?
- What do you think is the message of the story?
- Which character in the story did you like most? Why?
- How can the story relate to our everyday lives?
- Which character in the story do you most relate with? Why?

Lastly, participants should be asked what they think is the theme of the book. If no participant answers correctly, the leader will state the theme, "You are special!"

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If the class is large in number, it can be broken into smaller groups giving members time to discuss some or all of these questions. If this is done, each group should be instructed to select a leader whose job is to encourage and affirm each person to participate in the discussion. At the end of the allotted discussion time, the leader will share a brief summary of what the group discussed.

Bible Study (60 min.):

The leader states, "Jesus often taught in parables, simple stories that explain deep and important truths about the Kingdom of God. In a similar way, this storybook teaches the profound truth "you are special". As we explore the meaning of the book You Are Special, let's pray that hearts are open to the moving of the Spirit of God. Faith comes by hearing, and as we "hear" with our hearts, we grow in faith toward our God."

Participants are to write out **Romans 10:17** in their Workbook.

(After completing this, leader should pause and pray with the class.)

Leader asks, "On what basis are we special? What does 'special' mean?" The leader will continue by telling participants that in the coming lessons they will explore those terms and the basis for their uniqueness in Creation. The participants will look at the story again and explore a little more, taking a minute to write their thoughts about the following questions while being prepared to discuss in the large group once answered:

- Is Eli like anyone you know? Who and how?
- How are our parents or friends like Eli?
- How are our parents and friends NOT like Eli?
- **Who does Eli represent in this parable?**
- How is Eli like God?
- How is Eli NOT like God?
- Do you think Eli loves Punchinello? Why?
- Do you think God loves you? Why? Or Why not?

Who does God love?

Depending on the class size, leader will assign these next statements to individuals or small groups to read aloud the Scriptures and discuss. Participants can add any more Scriptures to the categories if they know others, and they can come up with life examples, too. If this is done in small groups, leader should have each group pick a spokesperson to share any examples or additional verses the group added.

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God loves those who never heard of him: Jonah 4:11 and Matthew 9:36-37.

- God loves those who sin against him: Romans 5:8 and Luke 23:34.
- God loves children and adults: Matthew 18:10 and 19:14.
- God loves the disabled and ill as much as the healthy: Luke 14:13 and Revelation 21:4.
- God loves women as much as men: John 4:27 and Galatians 3:28.
- God loves people of all races: Acts 10:34 and Revelation 5:9.
- God loves the poor as much as the rich: Luke 6:20 and Luke 4:18.
- God loves the entire world: John 3:16.

Leader should remind participants to add any life examples or additional verses if they know others.

Leader will direct participants to do the following activity:

Fill in the blanks about God's love for His special creation, us!

John 15:13

Greater _____ has no one than this, that someone _____
his life for his _____.

1 John 4:10

In this is love, _____ that we have loved God but that he _____
_____ and sent _____ to be the propitiation for _____ sins.

1 John 4:7

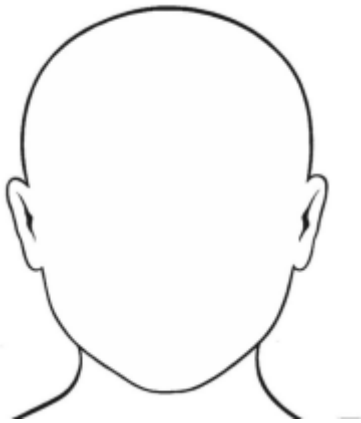
Beloved, let us _____ one another, for _____ is from God, and
whoever _____ has been born of God and _____ God.

Leader states, "Just like Jesus used simple stories to tell deeper kingdom truths, the author of this book, Max Lucado, used Eli, the carpenter creator of all the Wemmicks, as a simple picture of God who created us and loves us."

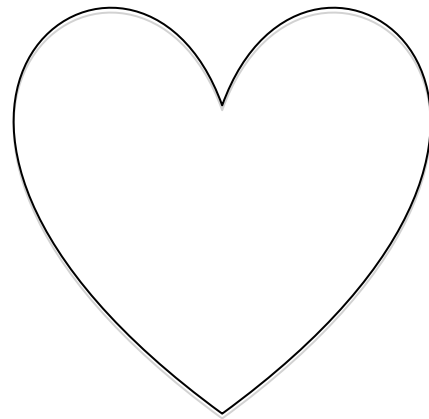
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Head and Heart Activity:

In their Workbook the leader directs participants to draw a line between the head and the heart and trace over the verse 1 John 4:16 below their pictures. They should write, "God loves me" within both the head and the heart images.



We **KNOW** with our head.
our heart.



We **BELIEVE** with

1 John 4:16

*So we have come to **KNOW** and to **BELIEVE** the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

In Closing: Leader closes by saying, "You have begun the journey of discovering that "Eli" is a representation of God, and God's love for you is great. Going back to Lesson 0, whether you have accepted the message of salvation or not, God loves you. If you are having a hard time believing that God loves you, we hope that these next lessons will show you differently. His love can change and transform you for all eternity!" Leader should have small group members turn to one another and say, "God is love, and God loves you."

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Extended activities (if extra time): In the Workbook participants do a “This is Eli” exercise and write down what they would say in a conversation in which they “introduced” Eli to another person. Leader should give an example of how to introduce someone by going up to a student and introducing them to the class (i.e., “This is Mingzhu. She goes to Qinglian School. She is in 5th grade. Her hair is long and pretty. She seems nice. She is an only child. She is not from Yunnan. Her favorite holiday is Spring Festival. She does not like to play badminton. She is happy today. Today, she read a book called You Are Special.) Later, once the participants have the book in hand, they can break into groups of 4 and read and act out the story with the 4 characters: A Narrator, Eli, Punchinello, and Lucia.

*******SPECIAL NOTE*******

An important part of the YAS message is to give each participant their own copy of the book, You Are Special. This is how it should be done:

While the participants are working and before prayer time, leader will call them up, one at a time, to give them their very own copy of the book. The leader should be sure to write their name in it with permanent marker before it is given to them. Before the book is presented to them, the leader should hold the participant’s hands, look into their eyes and, with genuine affection and conviction, say, **“There are over 1.4 billion people in China and you, _____ (say their name), are only 1 of those people, but you are special!”** The participants should be told that they are welcome to take their book home with them, but they must bring it back to use during every YAS lesson in the future.

Lesson 2

MCG Objective: The participant will define “special”.

Key Scripture: Genesis 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant’s Workbook and Bible
- Pictures of the Great Wall, the Olympics, Chinese New Year, a clock
- ***YAS MCG**

Anticipatory Set/Opening activity (20 min.): Leader asks participants what the word “special” means to them. Answers should be written on the board. Leader will show picture of the Great Wall and discuss with participants why the Great Wall is special. The participants should conclude that it is —**unique**. Leader will write the word “unique” on the board. Then the leader shows photos relating to the Olympics and Chinese New Year. Leader will explain that these events are special because they are “**of great importance**”. Leader will write “of great importance” on the board under “unique.” Lastly, leader will show a clock or watch and discuss the hands. They will explain that each hand on a clock is special because it was “**made for a particular purpose**”. Leader will write, “made for a particular purpose” on the board under the other two.

Students should draw in their Workbook in the space provided:

- ❖ The Great Wall and write next to it “Unique”.
- ❖ A Chinese New Year symbol and write next to it “Important”.
- ❖ A Clock and write next to it “Made for a purpose”.

Teach/Explain (20 min.): Leader instructs someone from the class to read aloud pages 25-31 and pages 9-11 from the story. Leader will then have them discuss:

- What makes people special in Eli’s eyes?
- What makes people special in the Wemmicks’ eyes?
- Are the ways the Wemmicks determine someone’s worth the same or different as people do today? Explain.
- Did Punchinello see himself as special?
- Did the other Wemmicks see themselves as special?
- Did Eli think Punchinello was special? Does God think you are special?

Before participants can understand that they are special, they need to know the definition of “special”. The definition is as follows: “1.) Unique; 2.) Of great importance; 3.) Made for a particular purpose.” Leader instructs participants to write out the three parts of the definition of special where indicated in their Workbook.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Bible Study (60 min.):

Participants read Genesis 1:26-31.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Leader tells participants, "You are special because you are **unique**; you are of **great importance**; and you are **made for a particular purpose**." The leader tells the participants that they are going to explore what the Bible says about this.

I. You are unique!

Participants re-read Genesis 1:26.

A. The leader explains that humans are unique among God's creation; they are uniquely different from the animal kingdom.

- Humans are made to **Rule** over God's Creation. (In their Workbook participants write out Rule after the first "R".)
- Humans are made to be in **Relationship** with God and with others. (In their Workbook participants write out Relationship after the second "R".)

R

R

B. The leader directs participants to complete this pattern in their Workbook:

##\$##\$## __##\$##\$#__\$

The leader explains that in the story of Creation there is a pattern. God spoke, it happened, and God declared it to be good. God spoke, it happened, and God declared it to be good. This happens over and over again for everything God creates until he creates humans. The leader instructs participants to read Genesis 1:31 to fill in the following blank as to how the pattern changed:

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Creation of Humans:

1.) God spoke; 2.) It happened; 3.) God declared it to be _____ good.

Leader asks, "What was the change in the pattern? Look again at Genesis 1:26-27."

Participants should conclude that all the rest of Creation was declared good. Human creation was **VERY** good. God was pleased to fashion a creation that could reflect His image and His character.

3. Leader explains that furthermore, humans are created unique from one another.

Participants read Psalm 139:13-16 and fill in the blanks in their Workbook.

For you created my _____ being; you
_____ together in my mother's womb. I praise
you because I am _____ and _____ made; your works
are wonderful, I know that full well. My _____ was not
hidden from you when _____ in the
secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw
my _____;
_____ ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to
be.

Leader tells participants that God knew them before they were born, and He made them to be like no one else. In their Workbook participants should do the following:

- List some ways you are like your family members. (Include physical features and talents or personality, too.)
- List some ways you are different from these same family members.
- List some ways you think you are truly unique. Do you think this is good or bad?

Leader states, "No two people are alike. Yes, we share many traits with other people, especially family members. However, science reveals that some things about us are unique, like fingerprints, eyes, heel prints, and our biological DNA. That's why so many sophisticated electronic devices have biometric security like finger print recognition. **God made you that way**, and no one on earth is exactly like you!"

Leader instructs participants to place their unique **fingerprints** from their right or left hand in the spaces provided in their Workbook using an inkpad or a watercolor marker for ink. They should be careful not to smear the prints. Later, participants can compare their prints with others in the class.

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You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

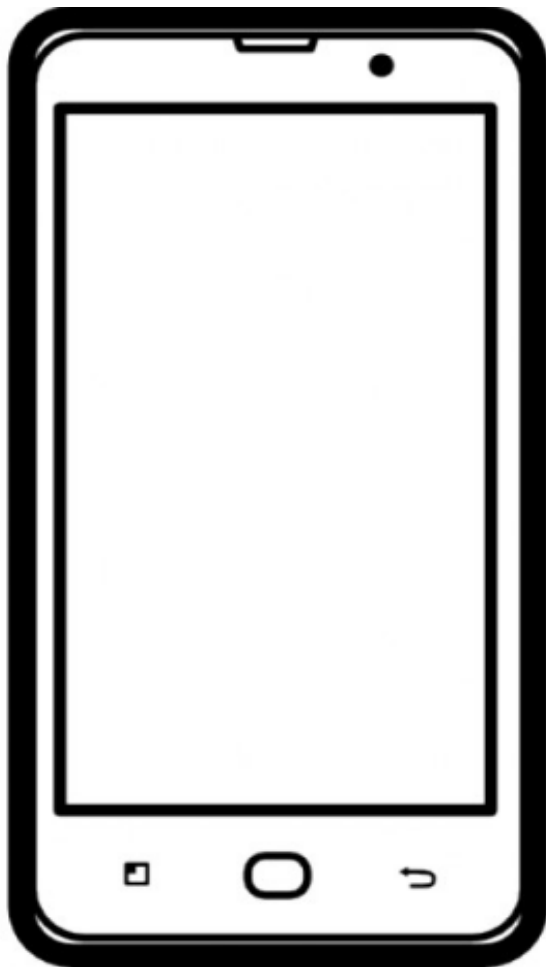
II. You are of great importance.

1. One reason for the great importance of humans is based on the fact that they reflect God's image.

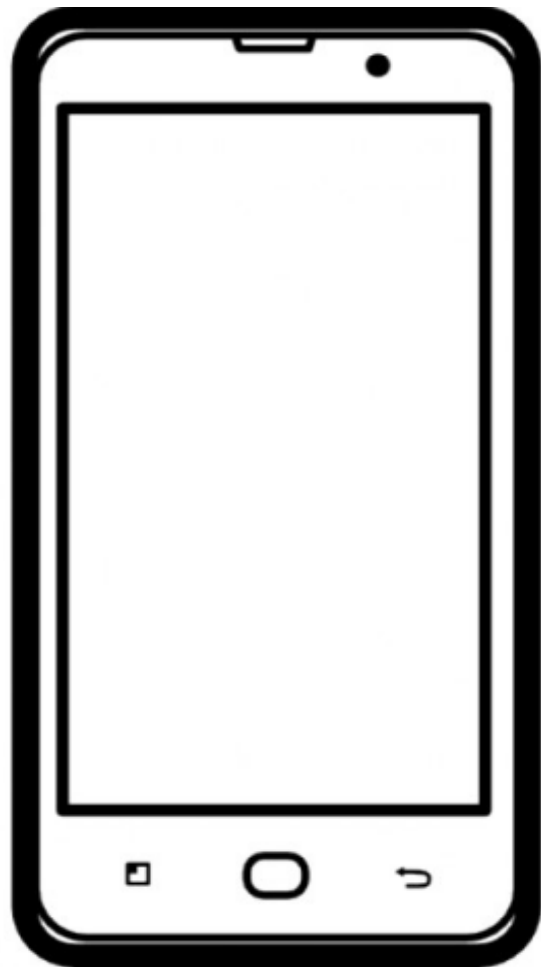
The leader puts their mobile phone in camera mode and passes it around so participants can take a selfie. (A mirror can be substituted.) Leader says, "An image is a reflection of you. What happens when the image is distorted?" (Leader will apply a distorting app like "Funny Face Changer" to a few select pictures.)

Leader explains that all mankind is made in God's image and has the capacity to reflect His character and qualities. However, until people come to receive Jesus as their Savior, that image of God can be distorted. (Leader shows the app images again.)

Leader draws the final conclusion that all people are of great importance because they are made to reflect God's image, but it's an awesome thing when, through Christ, they reflect that image without the distortions of sin. Participants will be instructed to complete the drawing exercise in the Workbook.



Draw an accurate image of you here.



Draw a distorted image of you here.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

2. Our importance is confirmed through the price God was willing to pay for us. Leader asks, "What's the most expensive thing you or your parents have ever bought? Why did you or they spend so much money on this item? It's because in some way that item was important to you or them. Read **John 3:16** to see the price God was willing to pay for us."

Leader instructs participants to read to themselves John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

III. You are made for a particular purpose

Participants read Genesis 1:28.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Leader asks, "Can anyone tell us what it means to be "fruitful"?"

Leader continues, "It does not mean you are to act like a banana. Fruitful means producing good or helpful results. Bible fruitfulness means producing God's character and qualities through Christ."

Leader has participants name some ways a young person can be fruitful.

Leader states, "If one of the ways you thought of being fruitful was the Fruit of the Spirit, you would be right, too. List the fruits in your Workbook as someone reads them from **Galatians 5:22-23**. Put a star next to the one you really want to see more of in your life."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Leader asks, "Can anyone tell us what it means to multiply? I'm not talking about 4 x 4. Multiply means to increase in number. Multiplication in the Bible refers to many kinds of increase, most importantly, an increase in the number of people that know and love Jesus. Can you name some ways a young person can multiply?"

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

The leader explains that young people can “multiply” by sharing Jesus’s love with others and bringing them into the knowledge of Christ. Participants are told what’s so amazing is that God will use each of them in different and creative ways to bring about this multiplication. They were made for the particular purpose of participating in God’s Kingdom plan, but the specifics of what that looks like will be especially tailored by God for each of them.

Participants fill in the blanks for Ephesians 2:10 in their Workbook:

For we are God’s _____ [His poem], created in Christ Jesus to do _____ which God prepared _____ for us to do.

In Closing: Leader closes by saying; "We are special because God created us in His image and for His purpose. In the entire world, there is no one exactly like us. We are special because God placed a high value on us when He sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our lives. He desires for us to be fruitful, displaying the Fruit of the Spirit, and to multiply by sharing the good news with others. **We are unique, of great importance and created for a particular purpose.**"

Leader closes with a prayer.

Extended activities (if extra time): The YAS Master Curriculum Manual Lesson 2 has additional activities like the “I Am Unique” exercise or the “Body Outline”.

Lesson 3

MCG Objective: The participant will recognize him/herself and others as special through acknowledging similarities and appreciating differences.

Key Scripture 1 Samuel 16:7b: *For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.*

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- God's Eye Exam Chart (See Appendix)
- 2 sets of glasses, one decorated as God's Vision, one as the World's Vision
- 3 gift boxes prepared in advanced as described in the Bible Study Activity
- ***YAS MCG**

Opening activity (10 min.): Which Way the Wind Blows: (The object of this activity is to discover similarities and differences among class participants.) A circle of chairs is formed around a center chair. Leader picks someone who is "it" to start the game and has them sit in the center. The circle of chairs should include a seat for everyone but should have no extra seats. The "It" person in the middle says, "The wind is blowing for anyone who...(and fills in with a trait or a characteristic about themselves, or an article of clothing, etc. that he/she has on them, i.e., brown hair, white socks, a sister, plays soccer, etc.). Everyone who shares that trait must quickly move to another seat once that is announced. It is important for leader to tell them that participants cannot return to their own seat. The "it" person must also find a seat in the circle. Since there will be one chair short, someone will be left out. That person is the next "it".

Learning (*See MCG Anticipatory Set) (25 min.): Leader will turn to page 7 in the storybook and discuss the similarities and differences among the Wemmicks. Leader will draw a Venn diagram on the board to record how a volunteer participant is different and similar to Punchinello. Different types of characteristics should be in this example for the participants to see.

The leader will assign partners and have the two of them do a Venn diagram together using the Workbook or plain paper. Participants decide who is partner #1 and partner #2.

1. The left-hand side will have characteristics about partner #1 (write in their name) that partner #2 does not have.
2. The right-hand side will have characteristics of partner #2 (write their name) that partner #1 does not have.
3. The middle section will have shared characteristics. It must be made big enough so there is space to write.

These characteristics can deal with physical appearance, preferences, personality types, family background, etc.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

If the participants have done this exercise through the MCG, then they can do it again by comparing themselves to a favorite celebrity or famous person they admire. The effect will be to see that they have some things in common with this person that they admire.

Discussion: In small groups or with the whole class, the leader will take time to allow for discussion of similarities and differences.

- Were there more similarities or more differences?
- Were there any surprises?
- What was learned from this exercise?
- How many of the attributes were just physical appearance?

Hopefully, this activity helped the participants connect on more of a heart level than just surface or appearance level which is the most common way that people compare and contrast themselves to others.

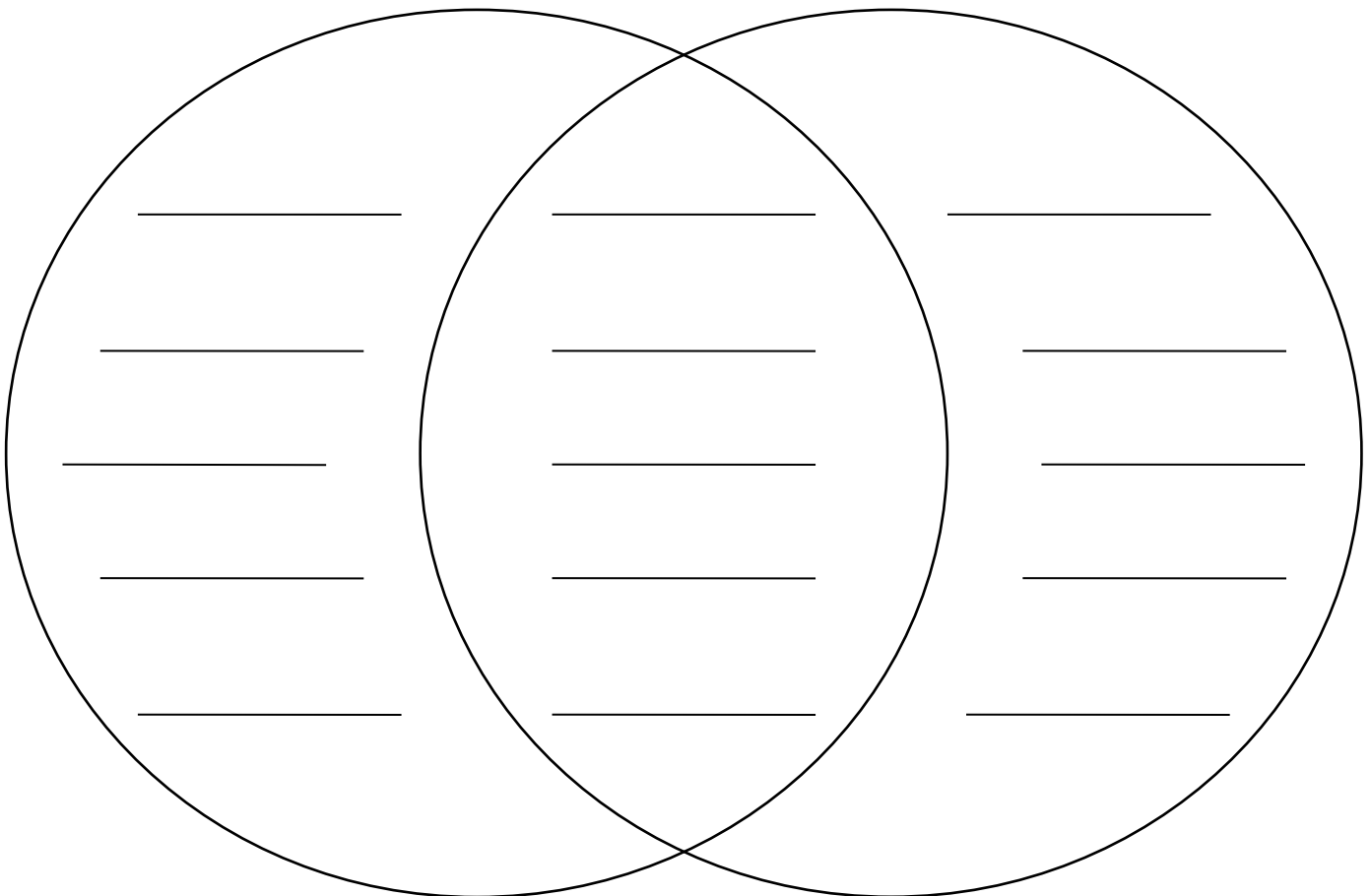
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Name: _____

Date: _____

_____ is special, because we have similarities;
_____ is special, because we have differences.

_____ 's characteristics Our Similarities _____ 's characteristics



You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Bible Study (60 min.):

Activity: Don't Judge a Book by its Cover (Don't Judge by What's on the Outside). Leader prepares ahead of time three gift-wrapped boxes (one small and one large, both beautifully wrapped, and one small and messily wrapped). In the small and messy box the leader puts a very special treasure like special candy, real ring, something beautiful. In the other boxes the leader puts something ordinary and commonplace or even rotten. The students choose which box they want for themselves. The leader will ask which box they have chosen by taking a show of hands. Most will want the big and beautiful box. Leader slowly unwraps the boxes, starting with the biggest and leaving the small ugly one until last.

Leader explains, "We tend to judge something by how the outside looks, like books, gifts, or even people. Have you ever been surprised by something that you thought was going to be bad from the way it looked, but it was really nice? Like Darian fruit! The outside doesn't necessarily match what's on the inside. We want God's "eyesight" as we look at others."

Participants read 1 Samuel 16:7b from Workbook.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Leader asks how many of the participants have ever had an eye exam.

Activity: God's Eye Exam (See Appendix for chart): Leader will place the Eye Chart on a wall across the room from all the participants. One at a time, each participant tries to read the chart from the back of the room. If no one succeeds in reading all the way through to the bottom line, leader should pick a volunteer and have them move one step closer with each line until they can read the entire chart.

Participants should take a minute to write out this translation of **2 Corinthians 5:16** from the Eye Exam in their Workbook:

So from now on we regard no one from a human point of view [according to worldly standards and values].



Activity: See through God's Eyes

(Leader prepares two pairs of sunglasses, one representing God's Vision, the other representing the World's Vision. The glasses should be decorated differently to differentiate.) Participants are to listen to the leader and write in their Workbook under "God's Vision" what the leader sees through God's eyes and under "World's Vision" what the leader sees through the World's eyes.

The leader explains that sometimes the world sees a person as being **boring, ordinary, common**, or perhaps **disabled** in some way. When God looks at a person, He sees someone **unique** and **special** (wears God glasses). When the world sees someone as **worthless, insignificant**, or even **invisible**, God sees him or her as very **important**.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

The world sees someone as **useless, talentless, or aimless**. God sees them as **created for a particular purpose**. (Students should be given time to fill in their chart and decorate their glasses.)

	
God's Vision	World's Vision
<i>(Unique)</i>	<i>(Boring, Ordinary, Common, Disabled)</i>
<i>(Important)</i>	<i>(Worthless, Invisible, Insignificant)</i>
<i>(Created for a particular purpose)</i>	<i>(Useless, Talentless, Aimless)</i>

In Closing:

The leader states, "We have the opportunity through Christ to see with God's eyesight. When we do, we can recognize others and ourselves as special through acknowledging similarities and appreciating differences. We don't focus on outward appearance, but look at others as God does, and affirm that they are unique, of great importance, and made for Kingdom purposes."

Leader quotes one Pastor who said, "When God sees any person He sees himself reflected in them. If we revere the Lord, we must also respect people, because they are made to be like Him."

Leader closes with a prayer.

Extended activities: If time, the leader can do the fun activity "We Are Special Bingo Board" with the class. It can be found and reprinted from Lesson 3 of the SDC section of the YAS Master Curriculum Guide.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 4

MCG Objective: The participant will know they are special by identifying and explaining traits that show they were made that way.

Scripture Reference: **Ephesians 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Pictures of famous athletes like Liu Xiang, a bee and flower, an ox
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- Set of 12 "Spiritual Gift Cards" (one set for each group of 4-6 participants)
- ***YAS MCG**

Opening activity (*See MCG Anticipatory Set) (15 min): Leader will show pictures of athletes such as Liu Xiang (or any other famous athlete) and discuss their body design. They will explain that Liu Xiang has won so many hurdle competitions because of practice, hard work, and the way his body is made. His body build is excellent for a hurdler. Animal examples can also be shared. A bee is designed perfectly for what he is supposed to do. An ox doesn't need wings. It has strong muscles. Participants can share ideas about how certain animals are made for exactly what they are supposed to do. Group should discuss that though the fallenness of the world leaves people with disability and disease, those individuals are still unique, of great importance, and made for a purpose. What the enemy intends for evil God can use for good (Genesis 50:20). Leader tells participants to think about how a blind person has a heightened sense of touch or hearing. (The famous painter, Joni Eareckson Tada, uses her teeth to draw and paint because she is a quadriplegic and can't use her arms or legs. Nic Vujicic was born with no arms or legs, but God made him a powerful public speaker and witness for Christ. Participants should realize that no matter what shortcomings or struggles they have, they are still God's glorious creations.)

Learning (*See MCG Teach/Explain) (20 min.): Leader reads the middle of p. 31 in the storybook and explains that Punchinello was made by Eli exactly the way he was supposed to be. Next, leader will ask the participants what, if anything, they know about cells. Their answers should be written on the board. Leader defines a cell as "the basic structural and functional unit of all living things" and writes that on the board. Participants should be shown the picture of a cell and guess how many cells make up the human body. After calling on people, leader tells them the answer, which is over thirty trillion. Leader asks the participants if they know how many zeros are in thirty trillion and waits until someone answers correctly. The leader will write 30,000,000,000,000 on the board and state, "Every cell has a purpose."

Leader will discuss with the participants that their fingerprint is uniquely theirs. Even though there are over 7 billion (7,000,000,000) people in the entire world, and China alone has 1.35 billion (1,350,000,000), nobody has a fingerprint like theirs! They are uniquely created by the Ultimate Creator.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

(At this time, the "My Hand" handout in the Master Curriculum Manual is especially fun for children to see their unique fingerprint in light of the many zeros in this large number. Leader should take time to have the participants do this exercise as it illustrates both the reality of the number and the uniqueness of each person.)

The leader states, "No two people are identical. Even identical twins are not identical!"

Bible Study (60 min.):

I. God the Ultimate Creator

Participants read Ephesian 2:10 in their Workbook.

Leader says, "Just like Punchinello was Eli's workmanship, we are God's workmanship."

Leader tells participants to think about a time when they "created" something like a painting, or a meal, or poem, etc. **In their Workbook, they should** write out all the steps they followed in making this thing (including gathering the materials needed).

The steps to make (name the item)_____

- 1.
- 2.
- etc.

(Leader calls on one or two volunteers to share their examples.)

Leader highlights how everyone's process includes at the very beginning the gathering of the materials they needed.

Leader states, "In reflecting God's image we are also creators. That's part of His plan. However, ONLY God can make something from nothing (Genesis 1:2), which makes Him the Ultimate Creator."

Leader continues, "All people are special and all people are creators because they are made by God. However, all the ways God made us special can only be unlocked through belief and acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior. One of the most significant ways He makes us special is through spiritual gifts."

II. Spiritual Gifts in Believers

The leader explains that the Creator God imparts gifts to His children that are meant to spread His Kingdom truth. They are unlocked as one comes to know who they are truly created to be. Participants take this survey to see in what areas their giftings might be. Leader reminds participants that everyone has some gifts, and God's gifts can develop and change as one grows in Him, so one shouldn't limit themselves to thinking they have none, or the ones they have are not helpful. God knows what He is doing as He gives gifts to His children.

Spiritual Gift Activity

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Name My Gift!

Preparation: Romans 12:6a on poster or transparency

Sets of "Gift Cards" with each of the 12 gifts, together with the definitions written on the cards, should be created. One gift should be on each card and there should be one set of cards per group.

- ❖ Affectionate - I like to show love.
- ❖ Giving - I like to share.
- ❖ Server - I like to help others.
- ❖ Leader - When there is a job to do, I take charge.
- ❖ Mercy Shower - I feel sorry for people who are sad, or sick, or in need.
- ❖ Teacher - I like to help others learn how to do things.
- ❖ Patient - I can wait without getting upset.
- ❖ Humorous - I make people laugh by things I say and do.
- ❖ Hard worker - I don't quit until the job is done.
- ❖ Dependable - You can depend on me to do what you ask.
- ❖ Friend - I am kind and willing to be a friend.
- ❖ Honest - I tell the truth.

Presentation: Leader reads Romans 12:6a with the students.

Discussion (leader asks the following questions):

- Do we each have the same gifts and abilities?
- Who gives these gifts and abilities to us?
- What are some of the gifts and abilities God gives to us?

As the students share, leader will write their contributions on a large sheet of poster board or newsprint.

Activity: Leader divides participants into groups of four or six and has them sit in a circle. If possible, an adult or teen should lead each group. Each group is given a gift bag containing the 12 "Gifts Cards". Leader says, "On each card has been written a gift or ability and its definition. One at a time, a person is to pick a gift card from the bag and read the definition. If you feel you have that gift, you may keep the card. If not, you may give it to the next person in the circle who feels they have that gift. Many will share some of the same gifts. Don't worry. You will have a chance to share what you think is a gift you have." Leader should make sure each participant has had a chance to pick one or more cards and state what they think is their gift(s).

Discussion: The groups are brought back together, and the whole group discusses:

- Was there a gift you hadn't realized you had until doing this activity?
- Why do you think you never recognized this gift before?
- How did you feel when someone described a gift and you knew that you had that gift?
- Was there a gift or ability that you don't have but would like to have? What could you do to develop that gift or ability?
- Is there a gift you think you have that is not mentioned here?
- Why do you think God has given you certain abilities?

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

III. Made for Something Bigger

Leader states, "As believers, we are part of a bigger community. The Bible sometimes calls this the Body of Believers. Just like a physical body, the Body of Believers has many parts, all of which are really important even though their functions are different."

Volunteers read out loud 1 Corinthians 12:14-18 from their Workbook.

Leader explains, "We see from these verses that every person is important to God's plan, just like every part of the body is important to the whole. What would happen if your lungs stopped working? Within a few minutes you would die. The same is true for your heart, brain, liver, and many other organs. Most of us know little about these organs of our body, and yet we could not survive without them. You could live without your eyes, ears, hands, and legs, but your life would be challenging. Just think of Nic V. or Joni Ericson Tada."

Participants should imagine if their whole body was an ear and draw a picture of a body that consists only of an ear.



Next, participants imagine if the parts of their body were not arranged properly and draw a body with its parts all mixed up.

Leader suggests, "We would be pretty funny looking and not that useful if we looked like either of these images." *(Leader has the class show their pictures.)*

The Bible uses many kinds of pictures to describe God's people (His community of believers). In small groups, participants are to look up each of the following passages and tell about the picture that is used to describe the community of God:

1. 1 Corinthians 12:14-18 (*body*)
2. 1 Timothy 3:15; Romans 8:16-18; Matthew 12:50 (*a family/children and heirs*)
3. Ephesians 6:10-18 (*army*)
4. Revelation 19:7; Ephesians 5:32 (*Bride*)

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Come back to the whole group and discuss:

- How does the Bible describe the Community of Believers?
- In a body, a family, an army, a Bride, is any one part more important or more valuable than another? Why or why not?

In Closing: Leader states, "God is the Ultimate Creator and has made all people special. Spiritual gifts are unlocked through belief and acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior. As believers, we are part of a much bigger community, and we all have a unique part to play in accomplishing God's plan and purpose."

Leader closes with a prayer.

Extended activities: The "Special Me" handout is available in the YAS Master Curriculum Manual. It is often very helpful for each participant to have a journal, and this exercise can lead into a journal time.

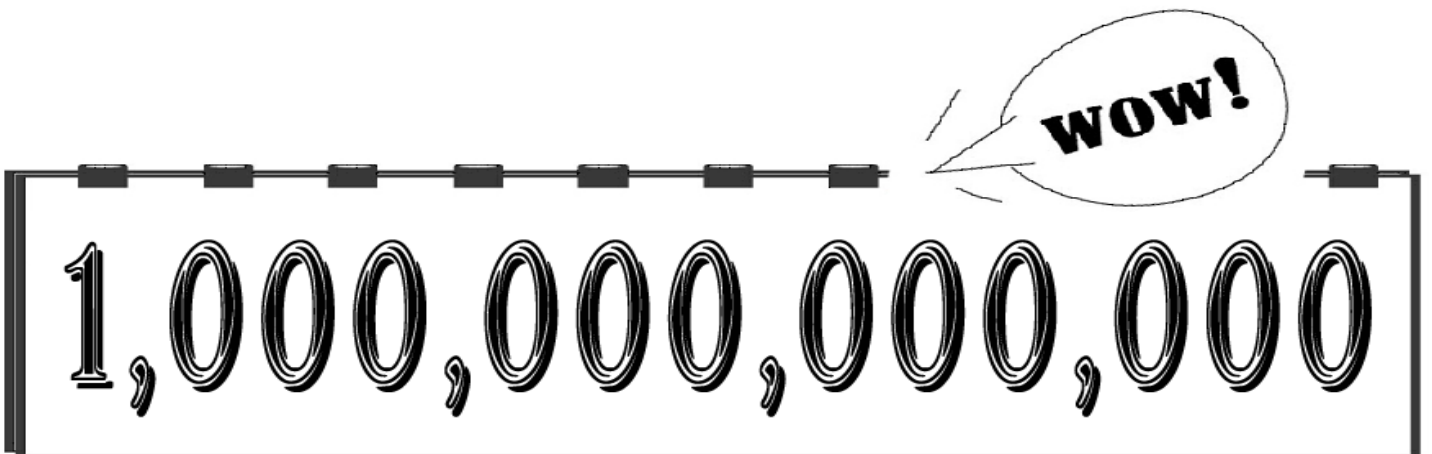
Another activity is to let the participants take the "Spiritual Gift Survey" (See Appendix) and discuss.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Name: _____

Date: _____

My Hand



Lesson 5

MCG Objective: The participant will explain the symbolism of stars and dots.

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- Pictures of common symbols
- 3 pairs of glasses prepared as described in "Log in Your Eye" teaching
- ***YAS MCG**

Matthew 7:1 *Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.*

Opening (see *Anticipatory Set) (10 min): Leader will show pictures of symbols and ask participants what the symbol/picture represents (i.e., lions symbolize courage; eagles symbolize America; dragons symbolize China, power, and masculinity, etc.). Leader will write the definition of "symbol" on the board. A symbol is defined as "something that stands for something else." Leader will ask if participants can think of any symbols in You Are Special. The group will discuss the possible meanings of the stars and dots in the story.





Learning (See *MCG Teach/Explain) (30 min): Leader will open with the following activity. Students are instructed to read p. 9-11 in the storybook. The leader explains that the stars and dots are symbols. Students brainstorm the types of things the stars and dots symbolize. Eventually, the leader will tell them and write on the board that a star is basically a symbol of approval and a dot is a symbol of disapproval. *(Leader will allow the participants time to write these two meanings in their Workbook.)* Leader will say, "Both are symbols of the judgments. Both are found in real life."

Leader shares some personal examples of stars and dots that he/she has both received and given. *(Some dot examples: bad at math, dark spotted skin, poor family. Some star examples: straight "A" student, beautiful hair, amazing singing voice.)*

Participants take time to journal in their Workbook about real life stars and dots they may have received or even given. Afterwards, the leader asks volunteers to share their examples.

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In your Workbook:

 Dots I have received:	 Dots I have given:
 Stars I have received:	 Stars I have given:

After sharing, leader will lead a class discussion:

What's the problem with giving dots? and receiving dots?

(Dots are a symbol of disapproval. Whether in little ways or big ways, when someone gives a dot, they are judging and rejecting that person. Ultimately a dot tears someone down.)

What's the problem with giving stars? and receiving stars? *(Stars are also symbols of judgment. The purpose of a star is to puff someone up. It can affirm self-centeredness and pride.)*

Leader states, "In Lesson 6 of the Bible Study we will explore how you can be free from dots and stars and other people's judgments just like Lucia. But first..."

Bible Study (50 min.):

The Log in Your Eye

Leader has three pairs of glasses prepared ahead of time: one has a small speck on one lens; one has a tree branch taped across the lenses; one pair is clear. A volunteer is asked to come up and try on all three pairs of glasses.

The volunteer is asked, "Which pair of glasses allows you to see most clearly? Why?"



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A participant reads Matthew 7:1-5.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. ²For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. ³And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

Leader suggests, "After reading the story, most people want to be stickerless like Lucia. Before you try to be stickerless, you need to change your habit of giving stickers. Are you ready to stop judging others? Are you ready to stop sticking stickers?"

I. What do you do if you have given dots and/or stars in the past?

Leader explains, "**Repent! Repentance** means to admit one's sin, turn away from it, and turn to God."

- 1. Admit** that giving dots and stars is unloving and a sin. Leader has participants review the chart they made in their Workbook with the dots and stars they have **given**.
- 2. Repent and turn.** Leader has the class form a circle. Participants count off and remember their number. Leader then calls out a number. The participant then turns 180 degrees to face the outside of the circle. That person then calls another number and the new participant does a 180-degree turn to face the outside of the circle. This pattern is repeated until everyone in the circle is facing the outside. Leader reinforces the definition of repentance as "to turn away from our sin and turn back to God".

Participants write out 1 John 1:9 in their Workbook.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

II. What do I do instead of giving dots and stars?

The leader states, "The Biblical approach is to communicate truthfully, communicate lovingly, and communicate while remembering that we are all on a journey to become more like Jesus."

Leader gives some real-life examples like ones listed here (or any others more suitable to the particular class make up) where people can so easily apply stars and dots:

- A new student comes to class and they smell super bad (dot).
- Someone lives in a big expensive villa (star).
- Someone on your sports team messes up a play and the team loses (dot).
- A student in the class always gets an "A" on every test (star).
- There's a talent show and a participant's singing is awful (dot).

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Leader should solicit from participants some examples of more loving but still truthful ways to relate to the previous people and situations. *(Example: Even if the student smells bad, one can still try to be kind and friendly. If they smell so bad it is not possible to sit near them, one may want to approach the teacher to talk to the student.)*

Practice: Participants should refer to their Workbook chart and pick one dot and one star that they have **given**. With a partner, they practice following the Biblical model to relate truthfully and lovingly while remembering that everyone is on a journey to be more like Christ. Leader reminds participants to remember this may include not mentioning the offensive issue at all.

Participants write out Ephesians 4:15 in their Workbook.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Questions posed by leader for discussion:

- Which is more important, obtaining more gold stars, or being free from the judgments of others? *(Obviously, being free is best. It's important to note, however, that you can't be eager to get rid of dots and still keep your stars.)*
- What is the difference between receiving gold stars from people and receiving approval from God? *(Approval from God is true, loving, and eternal while approval from others is subjective, unstable, and not lasting.)*
- Is giving someone a compliment the same thing as giving him or her a star? *(It depends. Affirmation is always nice to receive, and God wants us to affirm each other. Is your heart honoring who God has made that person to be, or is your heart just trying to flatter them?)*
- Is telling someone that you don't like what he or she is doing the same as giving him or her a dot? *(No, not necessarily. It is healthy to request someone stop doing something that is unkind, harmful, or hurtful. It's good to have healthy boundaries. At the same time, there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to say something corrective.)*
- Can you be truthful and loving at the same time? *(Absolutely! That's how God communicates with us, and that's how God asks us to communicate with each other.)*
- Can you think of a situation when it's most loving not to say or do anything? *(Sometimes the most loving and respectful approach is to not speak of the issue. Or, it may be kinder to speak about the issue to an adult rather than directly to the person, i.e., a smelly student.)*

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In Closing:

Leader closes by saying, "In the story, the symbols of dots and stars represent two types of judgment people place on one another. The dots represent disapproval, and it can be quite painful to receive dots. Stars represent approval, and while this can feel good at the moment, it can puff up someone's pride. Neither one is best because both dots and stars can cover up who we really are. Like Punchinello, we want to value God's words about us more than people's words. In the next lesson, we will talk about how Lucia kept dots and stars from sticking on her."

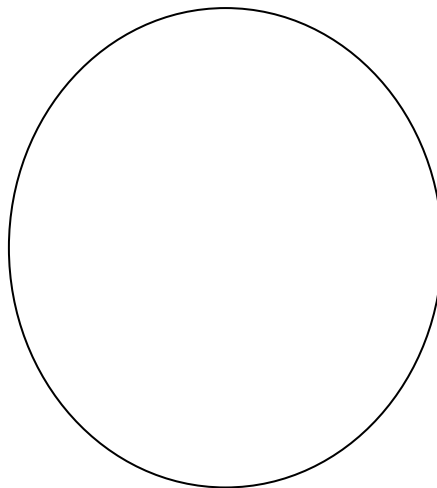
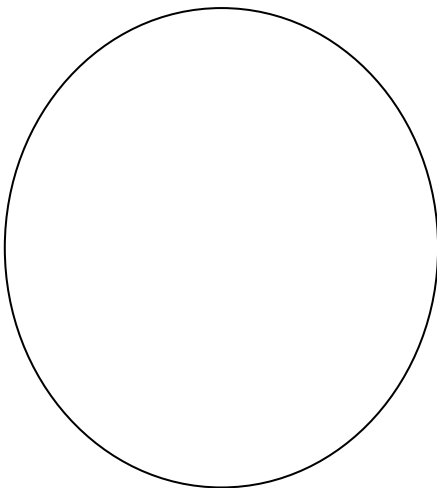
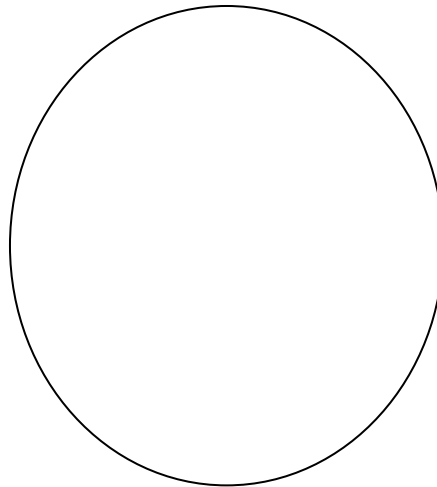
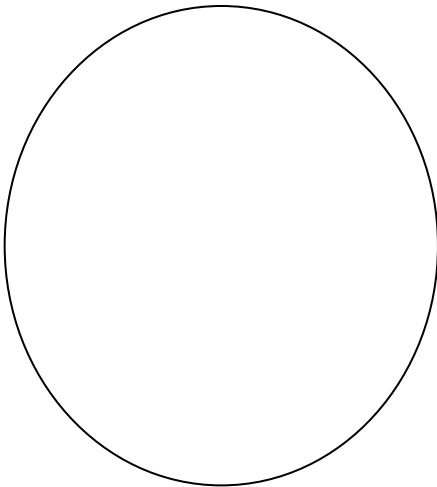
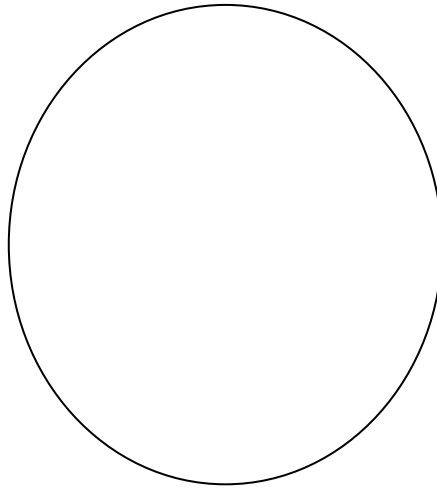
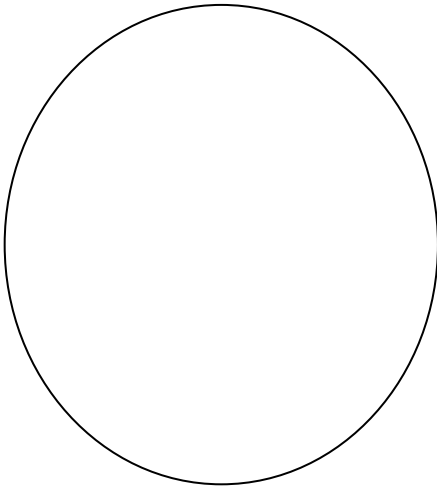
Leader closes with a prayer.

Extended activities: Participants go back over their dots and stars chart and submit these to God for healing and forgiveness, asking God to remove any grey dots and any prideful stars and to show them how they can begin to see others through His eyes with love.

Leader tells participants to use the dot and star stickers and write Scripture verses on them that will help them combat both the disapproving dot labels and approving star labels. They should place these stickers where they can see them and be reminded of God's Word.

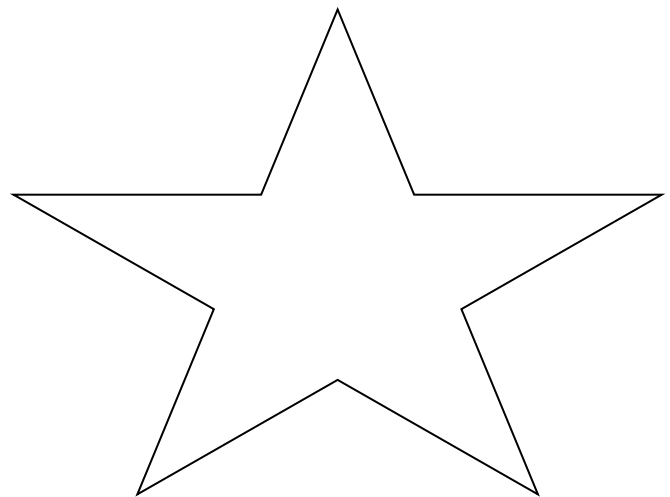
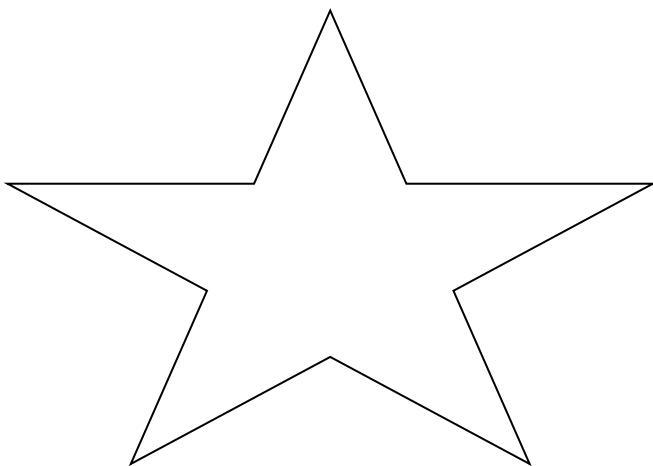
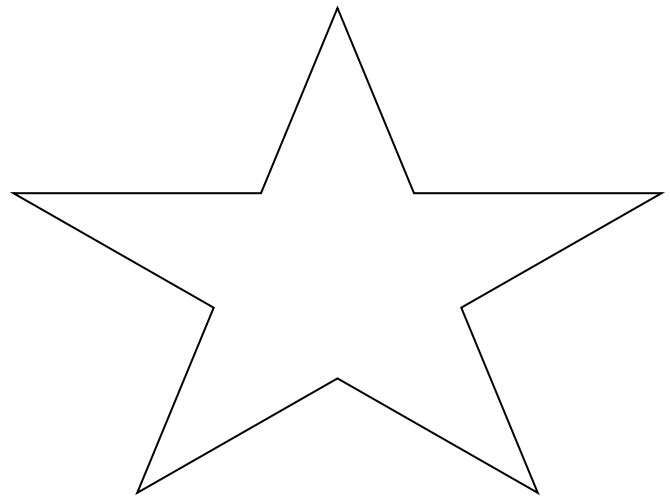
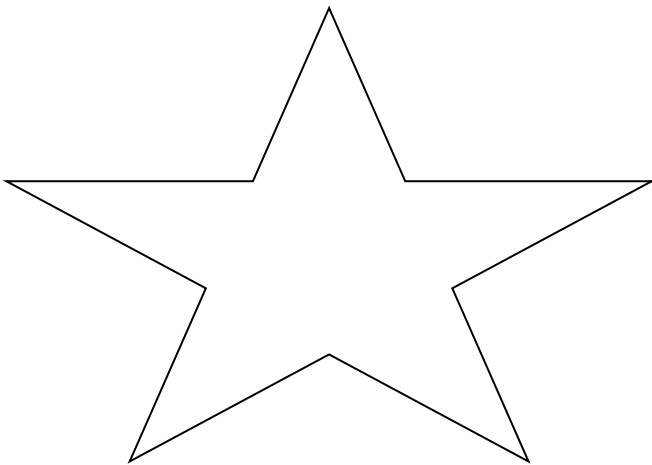
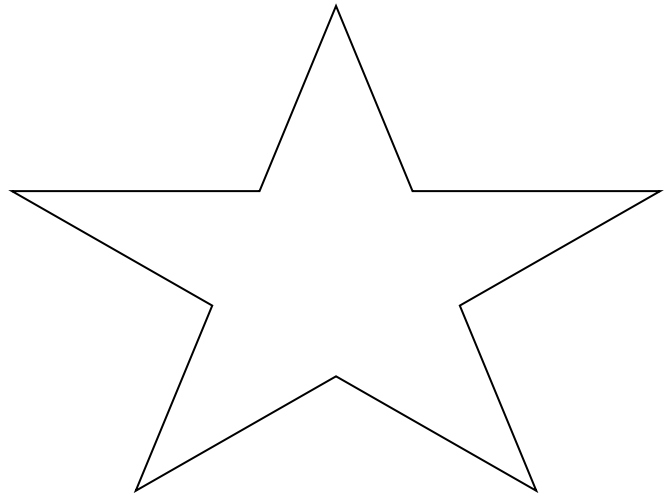
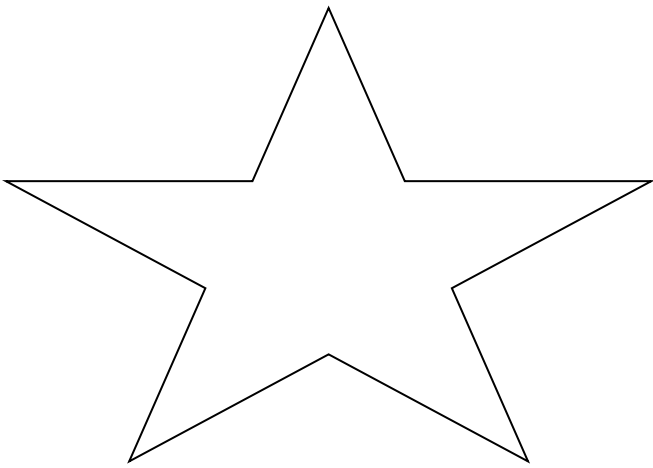
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Print on grey sticky paper and cut out.



You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Print on yellow sticky paper and cut out.



Lesson 6

MCG Objective: The participant will understand that it is a choice to accept stars and dots, and the best choice is to accept neither.

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- ***YAS MCG**

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.

Opening activity (*See MCG Anticipatory Set) (10 Min.): Group will discuss the word "choice." Then they should brainstorm ten choices that participants have to make on a daily basis (i.e. clothes to wear, food to eat, friends to play with, etc.).

Learning (*See MCG Teach Explain) (10 min):

Leader prompts a discussion with the following questions:

In the story, who had no stickers? Can someone explain how this was possible?

Leader explains that Lucia had no stickers, not because people didn't try to give them to her, but because she made a choice to not let them stick. Leader will reread p. 29 (*—"the stickers only stick if you let them"*).

Leader asks, "How was Lucia able to keep the dots and stars from sticking?" (*Answer: She went to see Eli every day. Eli told her, "The more you trust in my love, and the more you don't care about the dots others give you." Lucia came to trust in Eli's love by spending time with him each day. This gave her the strength to resist the dots and stars altogether.*)

Bible Study (70 min.):

Leader asks:

- Are you ready to trust more in God's love than in the grey dots you have received?
- Are you ready to care more about God's approval of you through Christ than in the gold stars people want to stick on you?
- If you said "yes", what would need to change about your daily life?

I. Spending Time with God

For Discussion (*Leader should decide if the discussion for Sections A and B is better to do in small groups or as a whole class. If the class is broken into small groups, leader should have the participants refer to the questions in their Workbook to discuss. Time should be allowed to have the small group participants come back to the whole class to share any answers or insights before proceeding to Section C.*):

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Fearing God:

In the story, Eli represents God. Punchinello finally went to Eli.

- At first, why did Punchinello not want to go to Eli? *(He was afraid of Eli.)*
- Why do you think some people hesitate to want to get to know God? *(They are afraid of God because of preconceived ideas, may have to give up their pleasures, or be different somehow.)*
- Should we fear God? *(There are many Bible verses that tell us to fear God. It is proper to have reverence, and it's appropriate to fear the punishment for sin apart from the provision of Jesus. However, in Christ we are accepted and can draw close to God without fear.)*

A. Finding God:

- Where was Eli to be found? *(He was in his workshop.)*
- Where is God to be found? *(God is all around us as well as within Believers.)*
- What was Punchinello's experience with Eli? *(Eli was not as scary as Punch thought. In fact, Eli was gentle and affirming.)*
- Do you think Punch will go back? *(Absolutely, Eli is wonderful, and a dot fell off.)*
- Why does Lucia always suggest a visit with Eli when Punchinello has a problem? *(Lucia knew that Eli's love would help change Punch's sense of worth.)*
- How did a visit with Eli help Punchinello with all of his dots and having NO stars? *(One dot fell off after his visit with Eli. Maybe Punch will also see that he doesn't need or want stars from people because he is assured of his worth every time he visits Eli, and Eli's opinion matters more to him.)*

Leader continues Section C with the class as a whole after reviewing the answers in Sections A and B.

B. Time with God: We can "visit" with God anytime we want.

Here are a few ideas about enjoying alone time with God:

- Some people use devotional books or a Bible reading plan they get from their Pastor or Sunday school teacher. Ask your Sunday school teacher for one.
- Every Sunday at church, write down a Bible verse you hear and like. Spend 5 minutes every day the following week reading it, asking God to help you understand it, and trying to memorize it. Get a new verse the next Sunday.
- Every night before you go to bed, talk to Him about 3 things you were thankful for from your day and 3 things where you need His help.
- Every day at breakfast review one page from this Bible Study, talking to God about it, until you've gone through the entire study.

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Leader tells participants to remember:

1. God talks to you through His Word.
2. You talk to Him through prayer.
3. The Holy Spirit will help you understand the Bible and guide you as you pray.

Participants are to write out 2 Corinthians 3:18 in their Workbook:

And we all, with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Leader states, "As we spend time with God daily, experiencing His love and glory, we reflect His image more clearly through the work done in us by the Holy Spirit. Of course, stars and dots don't stick on God. So, as we become more like Him, stars and dots don't stick on us. Instead of the judgments of people, we are secure in God's love and approval." (Note: Going back to Lesson 0, salvation is not found in the spiritual discipline of having alone time with God. It is found through the provision of Jesus only.)

II. The Strength to Make Better Choices

The leader explains the "**4 Tricks for No Stick**" method to make better choices in resisting labels (dots and stars). Leader gives at least 1 personal example for each as they go through the chart.

Participants can refer to the "4 Tricks" Method listed in their Workbook:

"4 Tricks for No Stick" Method: **1) Remind, 2) Decide 3) Ask 4) Act:**

1. REMIND yourself through reading God's Word that you are special.

Fill in the blanks:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man _____, after our _____. And let them have dominion over the _____ of the sea and over the _____ of the heavens and over the _____ and over all the _____ and over every _____ thing that creeps on the earth."

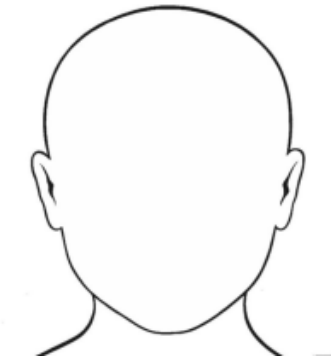
Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take _____ in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will _____."

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his _____ created in Christ Jesus for _____, which God prepared _____, that we should walk in them.

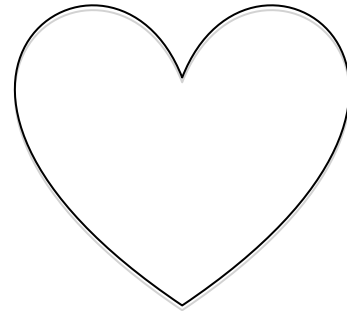
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1 John 3:1a See what great love the Father has _____ on us, that we should be called _____! And that is what we are!

2. DECIDE your value based on God's Word, not on the judgment of others (repeat this exercise). Write KNOW in the head image and BELIEVE in the heart,



We **KNOW** with our head.



We **BELIEVE** with our heart.

Write over the words below from 1 John 4:16:

*So we have come to **KNOW** and to **BELIEVE** the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

It's not enough to just **know** the Scriptures in the sections above that tell you that you are special. It's important to **believe** God's Word that tells you are special.

A paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 4:3-4:

As for me, it doesn't matter if I am judged by you or any human authority...It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

3. Ask, "What is true?"

God will use every circumstance in your life for good, to bring forth His best in you. That includes if someone tries to stick a star or dot on you. When and if that happens, it is important to take an honest look at yourself, and with God's help, ask some deeper questions:

- Is there any truth to the star or dot?
- What can I learn?
- What should I do next?

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4. ACT

What do you do with the star or dot? Write in your Workbook the answers to these questions:

- What or who do I need to forgive?
- What do I need to forget?
- To whom do I need to apologize?
- For what do I need to repent?
- Where do I need to take some other action?

After participants have had time to answer the questions above they will refer to the illustration in their Workbook as leader reviews the exercise with examples below:



- 1) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I **REMIND** myself of God's Word that says I am special; that I am unique, of great importance, and made for a particular purpose.
- 2) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I **DECIDE** to believe God about my value and not let the judgment of others determine it.
- 3) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I have the courage to **ASK** God to reveal to me:
 - a. What is true about this star/dot?
 - b. What can I learn from this star/dot?
 - c. What should I do with this star?
- 4) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I rely on God to help me take any **ACTION** that I need to take in order for this star/dot not to stick.

*(Example: Star could be, "You're so so perfect." God **reminds** me that there is no one without fault [Ecc.7:20]. I **decide** to believe that God began a good work in me, and he will complete it, but he's not done yet [Philippians 1:6]. I **ask** God to help me see myself in a healthy way and point out any way I may be puffed up in pride [Psalm 139:23]. I ask God to change me so I **act** more lovingly toward others, always considering others as I would want to be considered.)*

*(Example: Dot could be, "You're terrible at this game!" God **reminds** me that I can do all things through Christ, and I can get better at the game with His help. I decide to **believe** God and call on His skill and strength [Philippians 4:13]. I **ask** God to help me humbly admit any weakness and lack of skill so I can learn to be better [James 4:6]. I will ask God for any **action** I need to take to forgive the dot-giver and to trust Him to turn the situation around to my good [Romans 8:28].)*

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Closing: Leader closes by saying, "After spending time with Eli, Punch was changed from within, and as he left Eli's presence, a dot fell off him. In a similar way, when we spend time with God and in His Word, we are also changed from within. We discover just how much God truly loves us and how His thoughts of us are far more important than the judgment of others. People will probably always try to give us dots and stars, but we have a choice. We can accept them or not. **Reminding** myself about what God says about me, **Deciding** to believe Him over the judgments of others, **Asking** for Him to show me what to do, and then **Acting** on His guidance, I can be free from other people's marks!

Leader closes with a prayer.

Extended Activities: Participants can do the "4 Tricks for No Sticks" activity from the MCG as a homework assignment or a personal journal exercise, being sure to apply the Biblical version from this lesson to their understanding as well.



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"4 Tricks for No Stick" Method from MCG

Remind-Decide-Question-Act

- 1) **Remind:** Everyday you should remind yourself that you are special; that you are unique, of great importance, and made for a particular purpose.
- 2) **Decide:** Everyday you should decide that you will determine your value and not let the judgment of others determine it.
- 3) **ASK:** When people try to give you stars or dots you should ask yourself the following three questions:
 - What is true about this star/dot?
 - What can I learn from this star/dot?
 - What should I do with this star/dot?
- 4) **Act:** Decide if there is any additional action you need to take in order for the star or dot not to stick.

"Question" Exercise

 Star or Dot (Personal, Real-Life)	Question 1 What is true about this star/dot?	Question 2 What can I learn from this star/dot?	Question 3 What should I do with this star/dot?
			

Lesson 7

MCG Objective: The participant will demonstrate understanding of the importance of sharing the good news of the YAS message by helping others know they are special.

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- Bag of candies, enough for everyone
- Newspapers, markers, blank paper, glue or tape
- ***YAS MCG**

Key Scripture: Romans 10:14

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Opening Activity (*See MCG Anticipatory Set) (10 min.): Leader will greet everyone, indicating his or her delight in his or her attendance. Leader shares that this is the last session studying the You are Special Bible material. However, these lessons are not mastered in seven sessions; they are life-long lessons for everyone. Leader tells participants that even if they haven't mastered the material, they don't need to feel shy about sharing the good news of the YAS message.

The leader shares a bag of candy with the class and discusses other types of sharing such as sharing clothes, toys, or stories. Leader discusses sharing good news giving some examples (i.e., the principal announces that Jackie Chan or Fan Bing Bing or another celebrity is coming to the school to visit; the math teacher cancels the exam; one's aunt has a new baby; etc.). Wouldn't they want to know that good news and share that information with others? Leader asks if they have any good news they can share today and has participants share. Leader shares as well.

Learning (*See MCG Teach/Explain) (10 min): Leader rereads the ending of the book reminding participants that the story has good news. Participants should try to predict a sequel for the story or what they think Punchinello will do next based on his experience with Eli. *(He will likely share with his friends that visiting Eli was nice. Eli is kind. He lost a dot. Visiting Eli made him feel good about himself. The leader should make the point that just like Lucia shared with Punch the importance of regularly visiting Eli, Punch will hopefully share his good news with others, too.)*

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Bible Study (70 min.):

Leader asks, "Who can share some good news you really couldn't wait to tell a friend?" (*Leader solicits answers and responds with comments like "That's really great!" or "That is good news!" or "I would rush to want to share that, too!" getting the participants excited about the shared good news.*)

Leader states, "The Bible has good news, too."

Leader will lead a discussion to answer these three questions: **WHY** do we need good news? **WHAT** is the Good News of the Bible? **HOW** do we share this news?

I. WHY do we need good news?

Leader says, "You have probably noticed that the world is not perfect. More often than not, news headlines report bad things that happen all the time. Why is there so much bad in the world? Sin! Sin literally means to "miss the target". We were made in God's image to reflect His character and love. Anything less than that is sin, and sin is the source of everything bad and wrong with the world. Sin entered the world with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they disobeyed God's one, protective command, and they ate the fruit they were commanded not to eat. (Remember they had an entire garden of other delicious food to enjoy!). As a result, everyone born after Adam and Eve (that's all people!) were born into sin. It has been impossible to get free from sin and its very bad results. As sin takes hold, worse and worse things happen. Nothing we do in our own strength can break sin's hold on us, our loved ones, all humanity, or all creation. That's REALLY BAD news!! HELP! How will we ever break free from this terrible sin?"

Participants write out **Romans 3:23**:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Participants write out **Romans 5:12**:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Participants write out **Romans 6:23a**:

For the wages of sin is death...

Leader explains that in the story, Punchinello suffered from sin in two ways, 1.) Other's sinfulness directed at him when people judged him and did not value who he was created to be, and 2.) His own sinfulness in believing the judgments of the town's people rather than believing Eli, his creator.

Leader states, "People give us grey dots (sin), and Satan takes those dots and lies to us about our lack or worth all the time; he never lets up. We cannot define our worth by the judgment of others (sin). Instead, we must believe in God's love and what He has to say about our worth and value."

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

II. WHAT is this good news?

Leader asks, "What is the "good news" exactly and why do we need to share it? Hopefully by now you have learned that everyone is special, and that includes you! That is good news! You can share this good news with your friends and family by reading your storybook to them, telling them about these lessons, or sharing one of your favorite Bible verses about this topic."

Leader continues, "However, Jesus did more than make each one of us special. The word "gospel" means "good news." **The gospel of Jesus is the best good news you'll ever hear.**"

Leader tells participants what Jesus said this about the gospel:

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim **good news** to the poor.*
Isaiah 61: 1-2a

Participants keep reading on through verse 1 and 2a and fill in the blanks:

*He has sent me to _____ the brokenhearted, to
proclaim _____ for the captives _____ for
prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's _____.*

Leader says, "When he finished reading this passage, he said to those in the synagogue, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." In **Luke 4:21** Jesus says that he fulfilled the prophecy from Isaiah 61. He is the one who will proclaim and accomplish the good news. Jesus offers this good news to all who hear and believe."



The Good News of The Gospel

1 Corinthians 15:27b (Participants fill in the blanks):

For as in Adam _____ die, So in Christ all will be made _____.

Participants will do the exercise below:

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

<p>(Your name) _____ in Adam</p> <p>Spiritual death (trace over the word in the heart).</p> <div data-bbox="349 389 695 730">  </div>	<p>(Your name) _____ in Christ</p> <p>Spiritually alive (trace over the word in the heart).</p> <div data-bbox="928 389 1313 730">  </div>
<p>Relational death</p> <p>GOD (Here)</p> <p>(Complete the picture by drawing a stick figure of yourself far away from "God".)</p>	<p>Relationally alive</p> <p>GOD (here)</p> <p>(Complete the picture by drawing a stick figure of yourself right next to "GOD")</p>
<p>Physical death</p> <p>Draw an emoji with X's for eyes, or draw a tombstone.</p>	<p>Eternally alive</p> <p>_____</p> <p>EHNVAE</p> <p>Unscramble these letters to spell out where you will spend eternity.</p>

III. HOW do we share the good news?

Leader tells participants that it's natural to want to share good news with friends and neighbors. After all, news that can save them from death and offer life in all the wonderful ways discussed is good news indeed! But, knowing HOW to share may seem confusing or intimidating.

Leader tells participants that **Matthew 28: 18-20** is called the Great Commission. Jesus told his disciples, his followers, what to do next:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Leader asks the following two questions:

Who gives you authority to share the gospel? (*Jesus*)

Who is with you when you share the gospel? (*Jesus*)

Leader continues, "On a more practical level, there are many tools you can use to share the gospel. Can anyone share some examples (a tract, Evangecube, etc.)? One of the most powerful tools to share the gospel is through your personal testimony." Leader directs participants to complete **the "My Testimony" section in their Workbook.**

"My Testimony"

Where to begin?

It's so wonderful and useful to take the time to write down your story of how you came to know Jesus (also called your testimony). You will use this guide to lead you to write out your unique experience. Try not to compare with others as you write out your testimony. Everybody's story is different because everybody is unique. Just go through the questions and answer them honestly. Don't worry if yours sounds totally different.

1. **My life B. J. (Before Jesus):** Can you describe a little of what you were like before you knew Jesus? Do you recognize ways that you needed him even before you knew him?
2. **Coming to Jesus:** Who first told you about Jesus? If you know the specifics of when and where you accepted Jesus as your Savior, share that here. If you don't know or remember, share a few reasons why you believe Jesus is the Savior.
3. **The Difference:** What has changed in your life since you committed to Jesus? Really take some time to think about this. Are you different in any ways? Do you treat people differently as a result? Has anything inside you changed for the better? Have some things changed in importance to you since your decision?

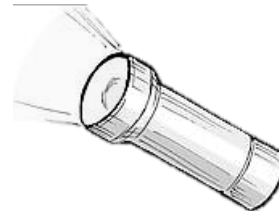
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Leader instructs participants, "Now, using the answers from these questions, write out your testimony like a story with a beginning (Before Jesus), middle (Coming to Jesus), and end (the Difference). Once you have written out your story, practice sharing it with a family member or friend who knows you. As you practice, it will become more natural to you. In the meantime, think about with whom you could share your story, someone who needs to hear some good news. Pray for God to lead you into the opportunity to share."

Leader reads Matthew 5:16.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

In Closing: Leader asks, "Can you think of news that was so great you immediately wanted to share it with friends? God has given us really great news to share, too. In fact, it is the most important and life-changing news there is; that He loves us so much and considers us so special that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us from sin. Do you think there are people in your life that may need to hear that they are special in God's eyes? Sharing the message of You Are Special can be as easy as sharing the book with friends or family because this simple story can be an encouragement for others. And if they ask you, "Who loves you unconditionally like Eli loves Punch?" you can share with them your unique testimony of God's love toward you as demonstrated in Jesus. That is good news!"



Leader closes with a prayer:

Extended activities (if time): Small group members are asked to read the story and related Bible verses one more time. They should think of friends who need to learn the message of You Are Special. They should pray for them, and think of how to share the story with them. Letter writing is a possibility, too.

Leader should make sure the students are prepared for the last class as a party to celebrate their specialness. Leader will want to have special snacks and treats for the celebration.

Lesson 8

MCG Objective: The participant will celebrate his/her specialness and the specialness of others.

Materials:

- You Are Special by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Participant's Workbook and Bible
- Enlarged copy of YAS Lesson Objects and Key Scriptures
- ***See MCG**



Key Scripture: Romans 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

Opening Activity (30 min.): Leader takes a few minutes and makes a fun memory game of reviewing each of the 7 prior lessons. An example might be for the leader to enlarge and print the lesson objectives on A4 paper and cut the Objectives into strips. Participants can put them in order. They could then match the 8 Bible verses to the lesson objectives. Finally, participants can share what they remember from each lesson reading the objective and the correlated Bible verse. Leader should make sure participants have understood the following summations, giving them a few minutes to write these down in their Workbook where indicated.

- Lesson 1: the theme of the book
- Lesson 2: the three-part definition of "special"
- Lesson 3: that all people have similarities and differences and all are special
- Lesson 4: that they are special because they are made that way
- Lesson 5: the symbolism of the dots and stars
- Lesson 6: that we have a choice to accept labels or reject them
- Lesson 7: the importance of sharing the good news of YAS

Open Mic (40-60 min.): Leader is ready now to end the class with a celebration of each person. Students should be allowed 5-10 minutes to prepare their sharing. Using blank paper in the back of the Workbook, they can jot down some main points to present. Their sharing should focus on one of the following topics:

- Their testimony they wrote from the last lesson
- The YAS lesson that was their favorite and why
- The most impactful thing for them from the program and why

Fun Activities (20-40 min.): Leader can select one of the following as a whole class exercise (or any others not listed) in addition to sharing any treats brought:

- Play a group game (For example: 4 Corners, Relay Race, Telephone Game, Red Rover, "team building" games).
- Create a class mural.
- Re-enact the You Are Special story.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

- Learn the "You Are Unique" song and hand motions.



You Are Unique
The world will be more beautiful because of you
Nobody is like you
You are precious in our eyes
And you are unique in the world

Oh you are so special
In our eyes
Nobody can replace you (*2)



You Are Unique
The world will be more beautiful because of you
Nobody is like you
You are precious in our eyes
And you are unique in the world

Oh you are so special
In our eyes
Nobody can replace you (*2)

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.



You Are Special (YAS) Bible Study Workbook

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

"You Are Special: unique, important, and created for a purpose."

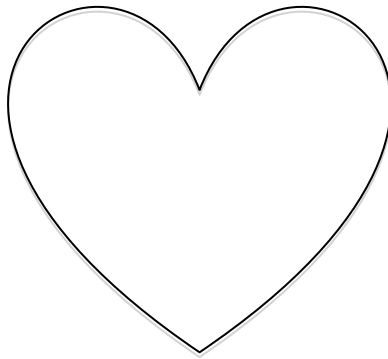
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

You Are Special Bible Study Workbook

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

"You Are Special: unique, important, and created for a purpose."



You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 0

Objective: To see the relationship between esteeming God and understanding his/her self-worth as well as hear the salvation message

Key Scripture:

Psalm 96:2: *Sing to the LORD, praise his name; tell of his salvation day after day.*

Bible Study:

Refer to these phrases:

"High self-esteem"

"Low self-esteem"

Some people might think this study would be about building self-esteem, but the Bible doesn't actually teach about self-esteem. It does, however, have a lot to say about esteeming God! Only when you esteem God and understand His great worth are you able to properly understand your self worth.

For what do we esteem God?

For who He is

For the gifts He gives

List some of your favorite qualities about God:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Write out 2 Samuel 7:22:

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I. Esteeming God for Who He is

Write down or draw the pairs of characteristics as they are explained.

Skit #1 (Revelation 5:5; John 1:29)	Skit #2 (Psalm 50:6; Romans 5:9)
Skit #3 (Psalm 47:7; Mark 10:45a)	Skit #4 (1 John 3:1; John 15:15)

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II. Esteeming God for the Gifts He Gives

What are some of your favorite gifts God has given you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Write out **James 1:17**:

SALVATION is the greatest gift of all because:

1. No other gift can compare! Write out Philippians 3:8:
2. It's a gift you get to enjoy now and for all eternity! Write out Ephesians 1:13-14:

So many people think salvation is nothing more than a **ticket** to heaven. If that's true, then what enjoyment would there be in the here and now? It would kind of be like getting a "hongbao" (Chinese gift envelope) that your mom said you couldn't open until you were 76 years old. Where is the joy in that? It's true that heaven will be more amazing than anything we can imagine (**1 Corinthians 2:9**), but there is a lot to enjoy about salvation the very moment you put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.

As the class leader gives you a red envelope full of tickets, take a look at what's inside.

Yes, one of the "salvation tickets" is for heaven, but the others are for all Christians to enjoy here and now. It's true that some parts of salvation take time and energy to enjoy. Could a toddler as well as a computer engineer enjoy an iPad? Sure, just at different degrees of sophistication. In a similar way, mature believers as well as brand new Christians have access to all aspects of the great gift of salvation.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Paste your Salvation Tickets here in the squares.

ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN	POWER OVER SIN
THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT	FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD
EFFECTIVE PRAYER	SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING
1 NEW CREATION	1 LOVING HEART

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

No one mentioned math as one of his or her favorite gifts from God. ☺ Math is actually a fascinating gift from God, and we are going to end our lesson learning the best math equation of all time.

Write the "Salvation Equation" below as the leader writes it on the board:

SALVATION EQUATION

_____ + Nothing = SALVATION

Just like in this math equation (write in the equation):

_____ + _____ = _____

What happens if you substitute another number for zero?

The equation no longer works. The only numeric value that fits the equation is zero.

The same is true with the Salvation Equation. Good works, attending church, tithing, Bible reading, etc. are all wonderful activities. However, they don't contribute to salvation and cannot be added to the equation. Salvation is entirely based on faith in the finished work of Christ.

If you have put your faith in the finished work of Christ, you are about to enjoy an incredible journey learning about how special you are! God created all people special, but only the Christian can truly understand and experience the full measure of their self worth.

If you are unsure about your salvation, please let your Bible Study leader know. They would be delighted to, not only teach you about how special you are, but to also lead you into an everlasting relationship with Jesus. (Leader, take this activity time to talk and pray with any student seeking to know more about salvation.)

Matching Exercise:

Below are the five statements of the "You Are Special" Program Biblical Framework. Look up the verses on the right-hand side and draw a line to the matching statement on the left:

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Everyone is special.	Romans 10:14-15
Everyone is special because they are made by God.	1 John 4:10
Everyone is special because they are made by God, because they are loved by God.	Genesis 1:26-27
Everyone is special because they are made by God, because they are loved by God, so that they can be secure in God.	Psalms 139:13-24
Everyone is special because they are made by God, because they are loved by God, so that they can be secure in God and share this message with others.	John 10:28-29

In Closing: Esteeming God for who He is and what He has done for us is the best place to start in order to understand self-worth. Salvation is the greatest gift He gives us and affirms the great worth of all people. The Bible has a lot to say about our worth and in this Bible study we are going to have an incredibly memorable time learning that we are special!

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 1

Objective: To understand the theme of the book, You Are Special

Key Scripture:

Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Learning: Read the book and understand the content of the story.

Some questions for you to think about and discuss:

- Did you like the story? What part of the story was most moving for you? Why?
- What do you think is the message of the story?
- Which character in the story did you like most? Why?
- How can the story relate to our everyday lives?
- Which characters in the story do you most relate with? Why?
- What do you think is the theme of the story?

Write the theme of the story here in BIG LETTERS:

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Bible Study:

Write out Romans 10:17:

On what basis are we special? What does "special" mean? In the coming lessons you will explore those terms and the basis for our uniqueness in Creation. Let's look at the story again and explore a little more. Take a minute and write your thoughts about the following questions. Be prepared to discuss in the large group:

- Is Eli like anyone you know? Who and how?
- How are our parents or friends like Eli?
- How are our parents and friends NOT like Eli?
- **Who does Eli represent in this parable?**
- How is Eli like God?
- How is Eli NOT like God?
- Do you think Eli loves Punchinello? Why?
- Do you think God loves you? Why? Or Why not?

Who does God love?

Read through these Scripture verses and discuss the following statements:

- God loves those who never heard of him: Jonah 4:11 and Matthew 9:36-37.
- God loves those who sin against him: Romans 5:8 and Luke 23:34.
- God loves children and adults: Matthew 18:10 and 19:14.
- God loves the disabled and ill as much as the healthy: Luke 14:13 and Revelation 21:4.
- God loves women as much as men: John 4:27 and Galatians 3:28.
- God loves people of all races: Acts 10:34 and Revelation 5:9.
- God loves the poor as much as the rich: Luke 6:20 and Luke 4:18.
- God loves the entire world: John 3:16.

Can you add any more examples? Add them here:

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Fill in the blanks from the verses below:

John 15:13

Greater _____ has no one than this, that someone _____
_____ his life for his _____.

1 John 4:10

In this is love, _____ that we have loved God but that he _____
_____ and sent _____ to be the propitiation for _____ sins.

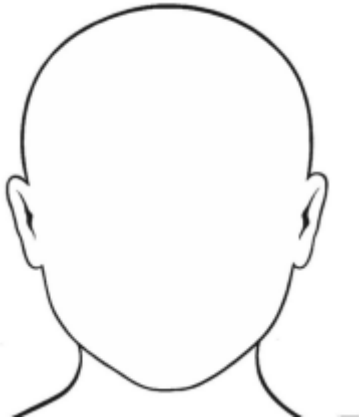
1 John 4:7

Beloved, let us _____ one another, for _____ is from God, and
whoever _____ - has been born of God and _____ God.

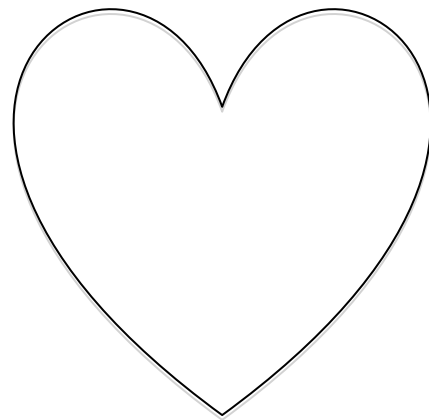
Just like Jesus used simple stories to tell deeper kingdom truths, the author of this book, Max Lucado, used Eli, the carpenter creator of all the Wemmicks, as a simple picture of God who created us and loves us.

Head and Heart Activity:

Draw a line between the head and the heart. Write "God loves me" within both the head and the heart images.



We **KNOW** with our head
our heart



We **BELIEVE** with

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Trace over the verse **1 John 4:16** below:

*So we have come to **KNOW** and to **BELIEVE** the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

In Closing: You have begun the journey of discovering that “Eli” is a representation of God, and God’s love for you is great. Going back to Lesson 0, whether you have accepted the message of salvation or not, God loves you. If you are having a hard time believing that God loves you, we hope that these next lessons will show you differently. His love can change and transform you for all eternity! Small group members should turn to one another and say, “God is love and God loves you.”

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 2

Objective: To comprehend the meaning of the word *special* and to understand how God sees us

Key Scripture: Genesis 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Lesson Summary: The meaning of "SPECIAL"

Draw	Write
The Great Wall	
A symbol for New Years	
A clock	

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Learning: Reread pages 25-31 and also pages 9-11 in the book. Think about these questions:

- What makes people special in Eli's eyes?
- What makes people special in the Wemmicks' eyes?
- Are the ways the Wemmicks determine someone's worth the same or different as people do today? Explain.
- Did Punchinello see himself as special?
- Did the other Wemmicks see themselves as special?
- Did Eli think Punchinello was special? Does God think of you as special?

Small group discussion: Can you remember the definition of *special* from the Opening Activity? Write the three parts of special here:

1.)

2.)

3.)

Bible Study:

Read Genesis 1:26-31.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Let's explore what the Bible says about being special.

I. You are unique! Reread Genesis 1:26.

A. We are unique among God's creation. We are uniquely different from the animal kingdom.

- We are made to **Rule** over God's Creation. (Below, write out the rest of the letters spelling Rule after the first "R".)
- We are made to be in **Relationship** with God and with others. (Below, write out the rest of the letters spelling Relationship after the second "R".)

R

R

B. Complete this pattern below:

##\$##\$## __ ##\$##\$# __ \$

In the story of Creation we also see a pattern. God spoke, it happened, and God declared it to be good. God spoke, it happened, and God declared it to be good. This happens over and over again for everything God creates until he creates humans. Read Genesis 1:31 to fill in the blank below as to how the pattern changed:

Creation of Humans:

- 1.) God spoke.
- 2.) It happened.
- 3.) God declared it to be _____ good.

What was the change in the pattern? Look again at Genesis 1:26-27.

All the rest of creation was declared good. Human creation was **VERY** good. God was pleased to fashion a creation that could reflect His image and His character.

C. Furthermore, we humans are created unique from one another.

Read Psalm 139:13-16 and fill in the blanks in your Workbook.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

God knew you before you were born, and He made you to be like no one else. In your Workbook:

- List some ways you are like your family members. (Include physical features and talents or personality, too.)
- List some ways you are different from these same family members.
- List some ways you think you are truly unique. Do you think this is good or bad?

No two people are alike. Yes, we share many traits with other people, especially family members. However, science reveals that some things about us are unique, like fingerprints, eyes, heel prints, and our biological DNA. That's why so many sophisticated electronic devices have biometric security like fingerprint recognition. **God made you that way**, and no one on earth is exactly like you!

Place your unique **fingerprints** from your right or left hand in the spaces provided here using a watercolor marker for ink. Be careful not to smear the prints. Later, compare with others in the class.

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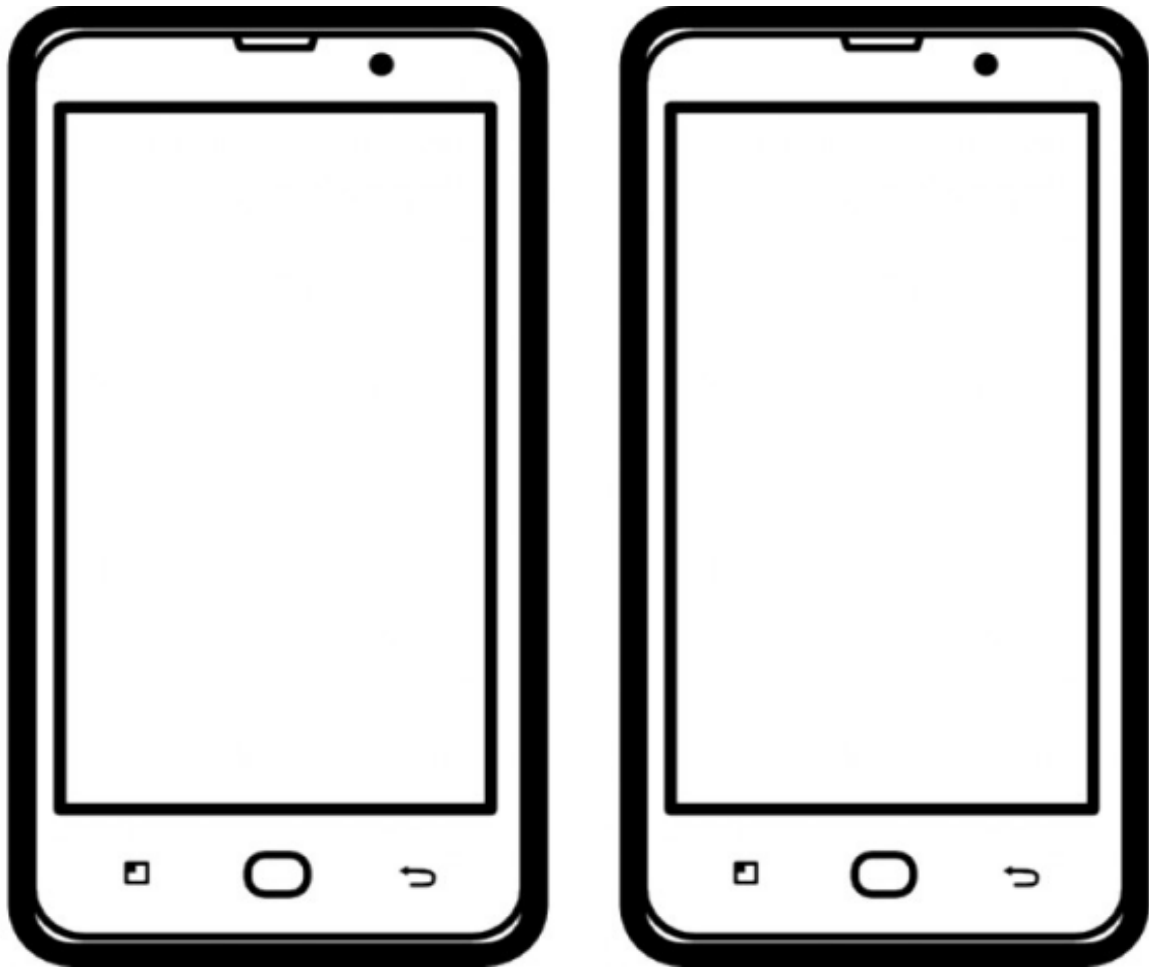
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

II. You are of great importance.

A. One reason for our great importance is based on the fact that humans reflect God's image.

All mankind is made in God's image and has the capacity to reflect His character and qualities. However, until people come to receive Jesus as their Savior, that image of God can be distorted. (Remember the phone images distorted from the app?)

All people are of great importance because they are made to reflect God's image. But it's an awesome thing when, through Christ, we reflect that image without the distortions of sin. (Do the drawing exercise in your Workbook.)



Draw an accurate image of you here.

.

Draw a distorted image of you here.

B. Our importance is confirmed through the price God was willing to pay for us. What's the most expensive thing you or your parents have ever bought? Why did you or they spend so much money on this item? It's because in some way that item is important to you or them.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Read **John 3:16** to see the price God was willing to pay for us.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

III. You are made for a particular purpose.

Read Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

What does it mean to be "fruitful"?

It does not mean you are to act like a banana. Fruitful means producing good or helpful results. Bible fruitfulness means producing God's character and qualities through Christ.

Can you name some ways a young person can be fruitful?

If one of the ways you thought of being fruitful was the Fruit of the Spirit, you would be right, too. List the fruits in your Workbook as someone reads them from **Galatians 5:22-23**. Put a star next to the one you really want to see more of in your life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

What does it mean to multiply? I'm not talking about 4 x 4. Multiply means to increase in number. Multiplication in the Bible refers to many kinds of increase, most importantly, an increase in the number of people that know and love Jesus.

Can you name some ways a young person can multiply?

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

(Fill in the blank from your leader's statement.)

"Young people can "multiply" by

and bringing them into the knowledge of Christ."

What's so amazing is that God will use each of you in different and creative ways to bring about this multiplication. You were made for the particular purpose of participating in God's Kingdom plan, but the specifics of what that looks like will be especially tailored by God for you.

Fill in the blanks of Ephesians 2:10:

For we are God's _____ [His poem], created in Christ Jesus to do _____ which God prepared _____ for us to do.

In Closing: We are special because God created us in His image and for His purpose. In the entire world there is no one exactly like us. We are special because God placed a high value on us when He sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our lives. He desires for us to be fruitful, displaying the Fruit of the Spirit, and to multiply by sharing the good news with others. **We are unique, of great importance, and created for a particular purpose.**

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 3

Objective: To recognize yourself and others as special through seeing similarities and appreciating differences and understanding how God views us

Key Scripture:

1 Samuel 16:7b

"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Lesson Summary:

Like people, Wemmicks come in all sizes and shapes. Some have big noses, some have large eyes, some are tall, some are short, some wear hats and some wear coats. "But all are made by the same carver and all lived in the village." In this lesson you will share differences and similarities with a partner through the use of a Venn diagram. You may find it amazing to see similarities where you may have not expected any.

Learning: After doing the Venn diagram as a class, how you are different from Punchinello and how you are similar?

Do the Venn diagram with your assigned partner in the space provided in your Workbook. Beforehand, decide who is Partner #1 and Partner #2.

4. The left-hand side will have characteristics about Partner #1 (write in their name) that Partner #2 does not have.
5. The right-hand side will have characteristics of Partner #2 (write in their name) that Partner #1 does not have.
6. The middle section will have shared characteristics. Make it big enough so there is space to write.

You can compare physical appearance, preferences, personality types, family background, etc. After you have completed the exercise, think about these questions:

- Were there more similarities or more differences?
- Were there any surprises?
- What did you learn from this exercise?
- How many of your attributes were just physical appearance?

It is hoped that this activity helped you connect on more of a heart level than just surface or appearance, the most common way that people compare and contrast themselves to others.

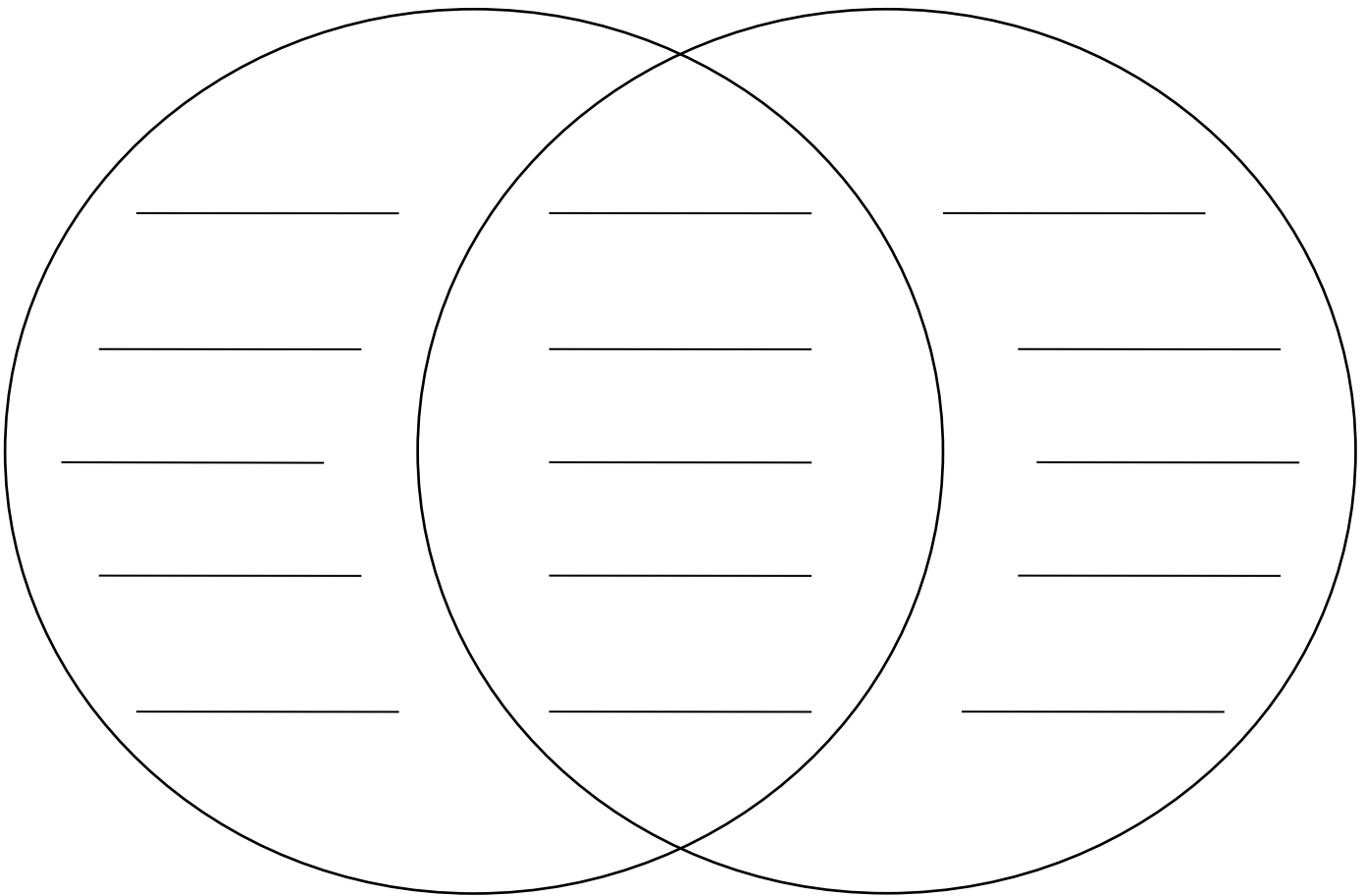
You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Name: _____

Date: _____

_____ is special, because we have similarities;
_____ is special, because we have differences.

_____ 's characteristics Our Similarities _____ 's characteristic



You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Bible Study:

Activity - Don't Judge by the Outside

People tend to judge something by how the outside looks like books, gifts, or even other people. Have you ever been surprised by something that you thought was going to be bad from the way it looked, but it was really nice? Like Darian fruit! The outside doesn't necessarily match what's on the inside. We want God's "eyesight" as we look at others.

Read 1 Samuel 16:7b.



But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

How many of you have ever had an eye exam?

After the Eye Exam Activity, take a minute to write out the translation of **2 Corinthians 5:16** in your Workbook here:

Follow the leader's instructions to fill out the following chart. If you want, you can color in the glasses as is appropriate.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

	
God's Vision	World's Vision
<i>UNIQUE</i>	
<i>IMPORTANT</i>	
<i>CREATED FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE</i>	

In Closing:

We have the opportunity through Christ to see with God's eyesight. When we do, we can recognize others and ourselves as special through acknowledging similarities and appreciating differences. We don't focus on outward appearance, but look at others as God does, and affirm that they are unique, of great importance, and made for Kingdom purposes.

As one Pastor said, "When God sees any person, He sees himself reflected in them. If we revere the Lord, we must also respect people, because they are made to be like Him."

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 4

Objective: To know you are special because you are *made* that way

Scripture Reference: **Ephesians 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

In this lesson you will explore your uniqueness.

Opening activity: As you look at the pictures of athletes such as Liu Xiang (or any other famous athlete), think about their body design. Liu Xiang has won so many hurdle competitions because of practice, hard work, and the way his body is made. His body build is excellent for a hurdler. You can think of animal examples, too. A bee is designed perfectly for what he is supposed to do. An ox doesn't need wings. It has strong muscles. Share ideas about how certain animals are made for exactly what they are supposed to do. Though the fallenness of the world leaves people with disability and disease, those individuals are still unique, of great importance, and made for a purpose. What the enemy intends for evil God can use for good (Genesis 50:20). Think about how a blind person has a heightened sense of touch or hearing. (Refer to the famous painter, Joni Eareckson Tada, who uses her teeth to draw and paint because she is a quadriplegic and can't use her arms or legs, or Nic Vujicic who was born with no arms or legs, but God made him a powerful public speaker and witness for Christ. No matter what shortcomings or struggles you have, you are still God's glorious creation.

Learning: Read the middle of p. 31 in the storybook. Punchinello was made by Eli exactly the way he was supposed to be. What, if anything, do you know about cells?

A cell is "the basic structural and functional unit of all living things."

Guess how many cells make up the human body.
Write the answer here:

_____, _____, _____, _____, _____

Your fingerprints are uniquely yours. Even though there are over 7 billion (7,000,000,000) people in the entire world, and China alone has 1.35 billion (1,350,000,000), nobody has a fingerprint like yours. You are uniquely created by the Ultimate Creator. No two people are identical.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Bible Study:

I. God the Ultimate Creator

Refer to Ephesians 2:10 at the beginning of this lesson.

Just like Punchinello was Eli's workmanship, we are God's workmanship.

Think about a time when you "created" something like a painting, or a meal, or poem, etc. In your Workbook, write out all the steps you followed in making this thing (Including how you gathered the materials needed).

The steps I took to make (fill in what you made) _____:

1.

2.

3.

4.

In reflecting God's image we are also creators. That's part of His plan. However, ONLY God can make something from nothing (Genesis 1:2), which makes Him the Ultimate Creator.

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All people are special and all people are creators because they are made by God. However, all the ways God made us special can only be unlocked through belief and acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior. One of the most significant ways He makes us special is through spiritual gifts.

II. Spiritual Gifts in Believers

Our Creator God imparts gifts to His children that are meant to spread His Kingdom truth. They are unlocked as we come to know who we are truly created to be. Take this survey to see in what areas your giftings might be. Remember, everyone has some gifts, and God's gifts can develop and change as we grow in Him, so don't limit yourself to thinking you have none, or the ones you have are not helpful. God knows what He is doing as He gives gifts to His children.

Here is an activity to help you see some of your gifts:

Name My Gift! Activity

Read Romans 12:6a.

As a class discuss:

- Do we each have the same gifts and abilities?
- Who gives these gifts and abilities to us?
- What are some of the gifts and abilities God gives to us?

Here are some of the gifts you will encounter in this activity:

- ❖ Affectionate - I like to show love.
- ❖ Giver - I like to share.
- ❖ Server - I like to help others.
- ❖ Leader - When there is a job to do, I take charge.
- ❖ Mercy Shower - I feel sorry for people who are sad, sick, or in need.
- ❖ Teacher - I like to help others learn how to do things.
- ❖ Patient - I can wait without getting upset.
- ❖ Humorous - I make people laugh by things I say and do.
- ❖ Hard worker - I don't quit until the job is done.
- ❖ Dependable - You can depend on me to do what you ask.
- ❖ Friend - I am kind and willing to be a friend.
- ❖ Honest - I tell the truth.

Activity: As instructed, sit in a circle with your small group. Each group will be given a set of cards. On each card has been written a gift or ability and its definition from above. One at a time, a person is to pick a gift card from the bag and read the definition. If you feel you have that gift, you may keep the card. If not, you may give it to the next person in the circle who feels they have that gift. Some will share some of the same gifts. Don't worry. You will have a chance to share what gift you think you have.

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Discussion after the “Name My Gift” activity:

- Was there a gift you hadn’t realized you had until doing this activity?
- Why do you think you never recognized this gift before?
- How did you feel when someone described a gift and you knew that you had that gift?
- Was there a gift or ability that you don’t have but would like to have? What could you do to develop that gift or ability?
- Is there a gift you think you have that is not mentioned here?
- Why do you think God has given you certain abilities?

III. Made for Something Bigger

As believers, we are part of a bigger community. The Bible sometimes calls this the Body of Believers. Just like a physical body, the Body of Believers has many parts, all of which are really important even though their functions are different.

Read out loud 1 Corinthians 12:14-18.

We see from these verses that every person is important to God’s plan, just like every part of the body is important to the whole. What would happen if your lungs stopped working? Within a few minutes you would die. The same is true for your heart, brain, liver, and many other organs. Most of us know little about these organs of our body, and yet we could not survive without them. You could live without your eyes, ears, hands, and legs, but your life would be challenging. Just think of Nic V. or Joni Ericson Tada.

Imagine if the whole body were an ear.
Draw a picture of a body that
consists only of an ear.



Imagine if the parts of the body
were not arranged properly.
Draw a body with its
parts all mixed up.

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We would be pretty funny looking and not that useful if we looked like either of these images.

The Bible uses many kinds of pictures to describe God's people (His community of believers). In small groups, look up each passage and tell about the picture that is used to describe the community of God:

1. 1 Corinthians 12:14-18

2. 1 Timothy 3:15; Romans 8:16-18; Matthew 12:50

3. Ephesians 6:10-18

4. Revelation 19:7; Ephesians 5:32

Be prepared to share your findings with the whole class.

In Closing: God is the Ultimate Creator and has made all people special. Spiritual gifts are unlocked through belief and acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior. As believers, we are part of a much bigger community, and we all have a unique part to play in accomplishing God's plan and purpose.

Leader closes with a prayer.

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Lesson 5

Objective: To explain the symbolism of stars and dots

Key Scripture:

Matthew 7:1 *Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.*





Opening activity: Give examples of symbols and what they represent. A symbol is defined as "something that stands for something else." Can you think of any symbols in You Are Special? What could they mean?

Learning: After brainstorming what stars and dots symbolize, write what the leader puts on the board for the following:

A star means

A dot means

Take time to fill in this table:

 Dots I have received	 Dots I have given
 Stars I have received	 Stars I have given

•

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Discuss:

What's the problem with giving dots? and receiving dots?

What's the problem with giving stars? and receiving stars?

In Lesson 6 of the Bible Study we will explore how you can be free from dots and stars and other people's judgments just like Lucia. But first...

Bible Study: The Log in Your Eye

Read Matthew 7:1-5.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. ²For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. ³And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.



After reading the story, most people want to be stickerless like Lucia. Before you try to be stickerless, you need to change your habit of giving stickers. Are you ready to stop judging others? Are you ready to stop sticking stickers?

I. What do you do if you have given dots and/or stars in the past?

Repent! Repentance means to admit your sin, turn away from it, and turn to God.

1. **Admit** that giving dots and stars is unloving and a sin. Review the chart you made in your Workbook with the dots and stars you have **given**.
2. **Repent and turn.** Leader has the class form a circle. Participants count off and remember their number. Leader then calls out a number. The participant that has the called number then turns 180 degrees to face the outside of the circle. That participants then calls another number and the new person then does a 180 degree turn to face the outside of the circle. This pattern is repeated until everyone in the circle is facing the outside. Leader reinforces the definition of repentance as "to turn away from our sin and turn back to God".

Write out 1 John 1:9 here:

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II. What do I do instead of giving dots and stars?

The Biblical approach is to communicate truthfully, communicate lovingly, and communicate while remembering that we are all on a journey to become more like Jesus.

As a class you will discuss these sample situations:

- A new student comes to class and they smell super bad (dot).
- Someone lives in a big expensive villa (star).
- Someone on your sports team messes up a play and the team loses (dot).
- A student in the class always gets an "A" on every test (star).
- There's a talent show and a participant's singing is awful (dot).

Think of some more loving, but still truthful, ways to speak to the above people and situations.

Practice: Refer to your chart with dots and stars you have **given** and pick one dot and one star. With a partner, practice following the Biblical model to relate *truthfully* and *lovingly* while remembering that we *are all on a journey* to be more like Christ. Remember, this may include not mentioning the offensive issue at all.

Write out Ephesians 4:15 here:

For discussion:

- Which is more important, obtaining more gold stars, or being free from the judgments of others?
- What is the difference between receiving gold stars from people and receiving approval from God?
- Is giving someone a compliment the same thing as giving him or her a star?
- Is telling someone that you don't like what he or she is doing the same as giving him or her a dot?
- Can you be truthful and loving at the same time?
- Can you think of a situation when it's most loving not to say or do anything?

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In Closing:

In the story the symbols of dots and stars represent two types of judgment people place on one another. The dots represent disapproval, and it can be quite painful to receive dots. Stars represent approval, and while this can feel good at the moment, it can puff up someone's pride. Neither one is best because both dots and stars can cover up who we really are. Like Punchinello, we want to value God's words about us more than people's words. In the next lesson we will talk about how Lucia kept dots and stars from sticking on her.

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 6

Objective: To understand that it is a choice to accept stars and dots, and the best choice is to accept neither.

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.

Opening Activity: Discuss the word “choice”. Brainstorm ten choices that you have to make on a daily basis (clothes to wear, food to eat, etc.).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Learning: In the story, who had no stickers? (Write the answer) _____.

Bible Study:

- Are you ready to trust more in God’s love than in the grey dots you have received?
- Are you ready to care more about God’s approval of you through Christ than in the gold stars people want to stick on you?
- If you said “yes”, what would need to change about your daily life?

I. Spending Time with God

A. Fearing God:

In the story, Eli represents God. Punchinello finally went to Eli.

- At first, why did Punchinello not want to go to Eli?
- Why do you think some people hesitate to want to get to know God?
- Should we fear God?

B. Finding God:

- Where was Eli to be found?
- Where is God to be found?
- What was Punchinello's experience with Eli?
- Do you think Punch will go back?
- Why does Lucia always suggest a visit with Eli when Punchinello has a problem?
- How did a visit with Eli help Punchinello with all of his dots and having NO stars?

C. Time with God: We can "visit" with God anytime we want.

Here are a few ideas about enjoying alone time with God:

- Some people use a devotional book or a Bible reading plan they get from their Pastor or Sunday school teacher. Ask your Sunday school teacher for one.
- Every Sunday at church write down a Bible verse you hear and like. Spend 5 minutes every day the following week reading it, asking God to help you understand it, and trying to memorize it. Get a new verse the next Sunday.
- Every night before you go to bed talk to Him about 3 things you were thankful for from your day and 3 things where you need His help.
- Every day at breakfast review one page from this Bible Study, talking to God about it, until you've gone through the entire study.

Remember:

1. God talks to you through His Word.
2. You talk to Him through prayer.
3. The Holy Spirit will help you understand the Bible and guide you as you pray.

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Write out 2 Corinthians 3:18 here:

As we spend time with God daily, experiencing His love and glory, we reflect His image more clearly through the work done in us by the Holy Spirit. Of course, stars and dots don't stick on God. So, as we become more like Him, stars and dots don't stick on us. Instead of the judgments of people, we are secure in God's love and approval.

II. The Strength to Make Better Choices

You will learn the "**4 Tricks for No Stick**" method to make better choices in resisting labels (dots and stars).

"4 Tricks for No Stick" Method: **1) Remind, 2) Decide 3) Ask 4) Act:**

1. REMIND yourself through reading God's Word that you are special.

Fill in the blanks:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man _____, after our _____. And let them have dominion over the _____ of the sea and over the _____ of the heavens and over the _____ and over all the _____ and over every _____ thing that creeps on the earth."

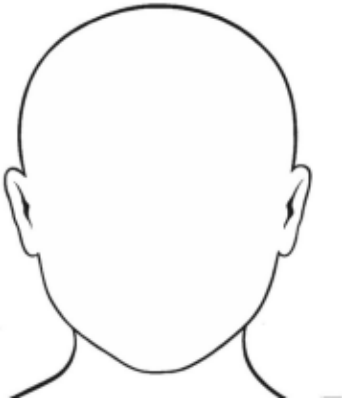
Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take _____ in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will _____. "

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his _____ created in Christ Jesus for _____, which God prepared _____, that we should walk in them.

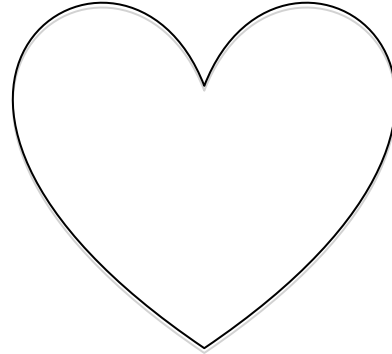
1 John 3:1a See what great love the Father has _____ on us, that we should be called _____! And that is what we are!

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2. DECIDE your value based on God's Word, not on the judgment of others.
Write KNOW in the head image and BELIEVE in the heart:



We **KNOW** with our head.
our heart.



We BELIEVE with

Write over the words below from 1 John 4:16:

*So we have come to **KNOW** and to **BELIEVE** the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

It's not enough to just **know** the Scriptures in the sections above that tell you that you are special. It's important to **believe** God's Word that tells you are special.

A paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 4:3-4 (Look up the verse in your Bible.)

As for me, it doesn't matter if I am judged by you or any human authority...It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

3. Ask, "What is true?"

God will use every circumstance in your life for good, to bring forth His best in you. That includes if someone tries to stick a star or dot on you. When and if that happens, it is important to take an honest look at yourself, and with God's help, ask some deeper questions:

- Is there any truth to the star or dot?
- What can I learn?
- What should I do next?

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4. ACT

What do you do with the star or dot? Write the answers to these questions below:

- What or who do I need to forgive?

- What do I need to forget?

- To whom do I need to apologize?

- For what do I need to repent?

- Where do I need to take some other action?

After you answer the questions above, review the “4 Tricks” steps here. Then read the examples that follow.



- 1) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I **REMIND** myself of God’s Word that says I am special; that I am unique, of great importance, and made for a particular purpose.
- 2) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I **DECIDE** to believe God about my value and not let the judgment of others determine it.
- 3) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I have the courage to **ASK** God to reveal to me:
 - a. What is true about this star/dot?
 - b. What can I learn from this star/dot?
 - c. What should I do with this star?
- 4) When someone tries to give me a star or dot, I rely on God to help me take any **ACTION** that I need to take in order for this star/dot not to stick.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Example: Star could be, "You're so perfect."

- 1) God **reminds** me that there is no one without fault [Ecc.7:20].
- 2) I **decide** to believe that God began a good work in me and he will complete it, but he's not done yet [Philippians 1:6].
- 3) I **ask** God to help me see myself in a healthy way and point out any way I may be puffed up in pride [Psalm 139:23].
- 4) I ask God to change me so I **act** more lovingly toward others, always considering others as I would want to be considered.

Example: Dot could be, "You're terrible at this game!"

- 1) God **reminds** me that I can do all things through Christ, and I can get better at the game with His help.
- 2) I **decide** to **believe** God and call on His skill and strength [Philippians 4:13].
- 3) I **ask** God to help me humbly admit any weakness and lack of skill so I can learn to be better [James 4:6].
- 4) I will ask God for any **action** I need to take to forgive the dot-giver and to trust Him to turn the situation around to my good [Romans 8:28].

In Closing: After spending time with Eli, Punch was changed from within, and as he left Eli's presence, a dot fell off of him. In a similar way, when we spend time with God and in His Word, we are also changed from within. We discover just how much God truly loves us and how His thoughts of us are far more important than the judgment of others. People will probably always try to give us dots and stars, but we have a choice. We can accept them or not. **Reminding** myself about what God says about me, **Deciding** to believe Him over the judgments of others, **Asking** for Him to show me what to do, and then **Acting** on His guidance, I can be free from other people's marks!

Leader closes with a prayer.


You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

"4 Tricks for No Stick" Method from MCG



Remind-Decide-Question-Act

- 1) **Remind:** Everyday you should remind yourself that you are special; that you are unique, of great importance, and made for a particular purpose.
- 2) **Decide:** Everyday you should decide that you will determine your value and not let the judgment of others determine it.
- 3) **Ask:** When people try to give you stars or dots you should ask yourself the following three questions:
 - What is true about this star/dot?
 - What can I learn from this star/dot?
 - What should I do with this star/dot?
- 4.) **Act:** Decide if there is any additional action you need to take in order for the star or dot not to stick.

"Question" Exercise



Star or Dot (Personal, Real-Life)	Question 1 What is true about this star/dot?	Question 2 What can I learn from this star/dot?	Question 3 What should I do with this star/dot?



You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Lesson 7

Objective: To demonstrate the importance of sharing the good news of the YAS message to help others know they are special

Key Scripture: Romans 10:14

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Opening Activity:

Do you have any good news you can't wait to share? Write it here.

Learning: Reread the ending of the book. Discuss a sequel for the story or what you think Punchinello will do next.

Bible Study:

The Bible has good news, too.

WHY do we need good news? **WHAT** is the Good News of the Bible? **HOW** do we share this news?

I. WHY do we need good news?

You have probably noticed that the world is not perfect. More often than not, news headlines report bad things that happen all the time. Why is there so much bad in the world? Sin! Sin literally means to "miss the target". We were made in God's image to reflect His character and love. Anything less than that is sin, and sin is the source of everything bad and wrong with the world. Sin entered the world with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they disobeyed God's one, protective command and they ate the fruit they were commanded not to eat. (Remember they had an entire garden of other delicious food to enjoy!) As a result, everyone born after Adam and Eve (that's all people!) were born into sin. It has been impossible to get free from sin and its very bad results. As sin takes hold, worse and worse things happen. Nothing we do in our own strength can break sin's hold on us, our loved ones, all humanity, or all creation. That's REALLY BAD news!! HELP! How will we ever break free from this terrible sin?

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Write out **Romans 3:23** here:

Write out **Romans 5:12** here:

Write out **Romans 6:23a** here:

In the story, Punchinello suffered from sin in two ways: 1.) Other's sinfulness directed at him when people judged him and did not value who he was created to be, and 2.) His own sinfulness in believing the judgments of the town's people rather than believing Eli, his creator.

People give us grey dots (sin) and Satan takes those dots and lies to us about our lack of worth all the time; he never lets up. We cannot define our worth by the judgment of others (sin). Instead, we must believe in God's love and what He has to say about our worth and value.

II. WHAT is this good news?

What is the "good news" exactly, and why do we need to share it?

Hopefully by now you have learned that everyone is special, and that includes you! That is good news! You can share this good news with your friends and family by reading your storybook to them, telling them about these lessons, or sharing one of your favorite Bible verses about this topic.

However, Jesus did more than make each one of us special.

The word "gospel" means "good news." **The gospel of Jesus is the best good news you'll ever hear.**

Jesus said this about the gospel:

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim **good news** to the poor.
Isaiah 61: 1-2a*

Keep reading on through verse 1 and 2a and fill in the blanks:

*He has sent me to _____ the brokenhearted, to
proclaim _____ for the captives _____ for
prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's _____.*



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When he finished reading this passage, He said to those in the synagogue, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." In **Luke 4:21** Jesus says that he fulfilled the prophecy from Isaiah 61. He is the one who will proclaim and accomplish the good news. Jesus offers this good news to all who hear and believe.

1 Corinthians 15:27b (fill in the blank):

For as in Adam _____ die, so in Christ all will be made _____.

Do the exercise below:

(Your name)_____ in Adam	(Your name) _____in Christ
Spiritual death (Trace over the word in the heart.) 	Spiritually alive (Trace over the word in the heart.) 
Relational death GOD (Here) (Complete the picture by drawing a stick figure of yourself far away from "God".)	Relationally alive GOD (here) (Complete the picture by drawing a stick figure of yourself right next to "GOD".)
Physical death Draw an emoji with X's for eyes, or draw a tombstone.	Eternally alive _____ EHNVAE Unscramble these letters to spell out where you will spend eternity.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

III. HOW do we share the good news?

It's natural to want to share good news with your friends and neighbors. After all, news that can save them from death and offer life in all the wonderful ways we discussed is good news indeed! But, knowing HOW to share may seem confusing or intimidating.

Matthew 28: 18-20 is called the Great Commission. Jesus told his disciples, his followers, what to do next:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Who gives you authority to share the gospel? _____

Who is with you when you share the gospel? _____

On a more practical level, there are many tools you can use to share the gospel. Can anyone share some examples (a tract, Evangecube, etc.)? One of the most powerful tools to share the gospel is through your personal testimony. **Complete the "My Testimony" section in your Workbook.**

"My Testimony"

Where to begin?

It's so wonderful and useful to take the time to write down your story of how you came to know Jesus (also called your testimony). You will use this guide to lead you to write out your unique experience. Try not to compare with others as you write out your testimony. Everybody's story is different because everybody is unique. Just go through the questions and answer them honestly. Don't worry if yours sounds totally different. You will have a whole page to write on each section below.

- A. My life B. J. (Before Jesus):** Can you describe a little of what you were like before you knew Jesus? Do you recognize ways that you needed him even before you knew him? Tell us.
- B. Coming to Jesus:** Who first told you about Jesus? If you know the specifics of when and where you accepted Jesus as your Savior, share that here. If you don't know or remember, share a few reasons why you believe Jesus is the Savior.
- C. The Difference:** What has changed in your life since you committed to Jesus? Really take some time to think about this. Are you different in any ways? Do you treat people differently as a result? Has anything inside you changed for the better? Have some things changed in importance to you since your decision?

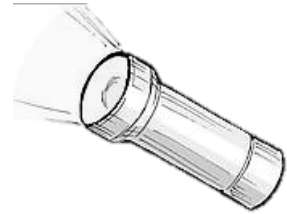
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Once you have finished answering the questions, on a separate piece of paper use the answers to write out your entire testimony like a story with a beginning (Before Jesus), middle (Coming to Jesus) and end (the Difference).

Finally, practice sharing it with a family member or friend who knows you. As you practice, it will become more natural to you. In the meantime, think about with whom you could share your story, someone who needs to hear some good news. Pray for God to lead you into the opportunity to share.

Read Matthew 5:16. *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

In Closing: Can you think of news that was so great you immediately wanted to share it with friends? God has given us really great news to share, too. In fact, it is the most important and life-changing news there is; He loves us so much and considers us so special that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us from sin. Do you think there are people in your life that may need to hear that they are special in God's eyes? Sharing the message of You Are Special can be as easy as sharing the book with friends or family because this simple story can be an encouragement for others. And if they ask you, "Who loves you unconditionally like Eli loves Punch?" you can share with them your unique testimony of God's love toward you as demonstrated in Jesus. That is good news!



Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

My Testimony Part 1

1. My life B. J. (Before Jesus)

[illegible]

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My Testimony Part 2

2. Coming to Jesus

[illegible]

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My Testimony Part 3

3. The Difference

[illegible]

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Lesson 8

Objective: To celebrate your specialness and the specialness of others.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*



Opening Activity: Take a few minutes to review each of the 7 prior lessons. What do you remember about them?

Lesson 1: What is the theme of the book?

Lesson 2: What is the three-part definition of "special"?

- A.
- B.
- C.

Lesson 3: What tool did you use to see that all people have similarities and differences and all are special?

Lesson 4: How did people become special?

Lesson 5: What is the symbolism of the dots and stars?

Lesson 6: What choice do we have regarding labels?

Lesson 7: List some reasons for sharing the YAS message.

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Prepare for Open Mic:

Pick an idea from this list, and using a blank page in your Workbook, jot down some key points you want to share with the class:

:

- The testimony you wrote from the last lesson
- Which YAS lesson was your favorite and why?
- What most impacted you from the program and why?

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In Closing:

These past days (and weeks), we have gone on a journey learning about God's love and purpose for us. First, we saw how a children's book can convey a deep eternal truth, that each of us is special. We learned that special means "unique, important, and created for a purpose." While we are all unique, we saw with the Venn diagram that we also share many traits. That's because we are from the same family, the family of God, and we are all His beloved children. He commands us to love one another as He loves us. Therefore, we must learn to treat one another with respect, not giving disapproving dots or flattering stars to people, but instead, learn ways to speak the truth in love. This includes applying the same truth to ourselves. We learned that the best way to avoid accepting either dots or stars is to be secure in our relationship with God, and we do that by spending time with Him daily, learning, *and believing* what He says about us. As we practice that, we become more like Him, and people will notice the change! Sharing what you have learned in this program can be a life changing experience with eternal consequences for your friends. We hope you will see great fruit as you do.

Leader closes with a prayer.

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.



You Are Unique
The world will be more beautiful because of you
Nobody is like you
You are precious in our eyes
And you are unique in the world

Oh you are so special
In our eyes
Nobody can replace you (*2)



You Are Unique
The world will be more beautiful because of you
Nobody is like you
You are precious in our eyes
And you are unique in the world

Oh you are so special
In our eyes
Nobody can replace you (*2)

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Appendix

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

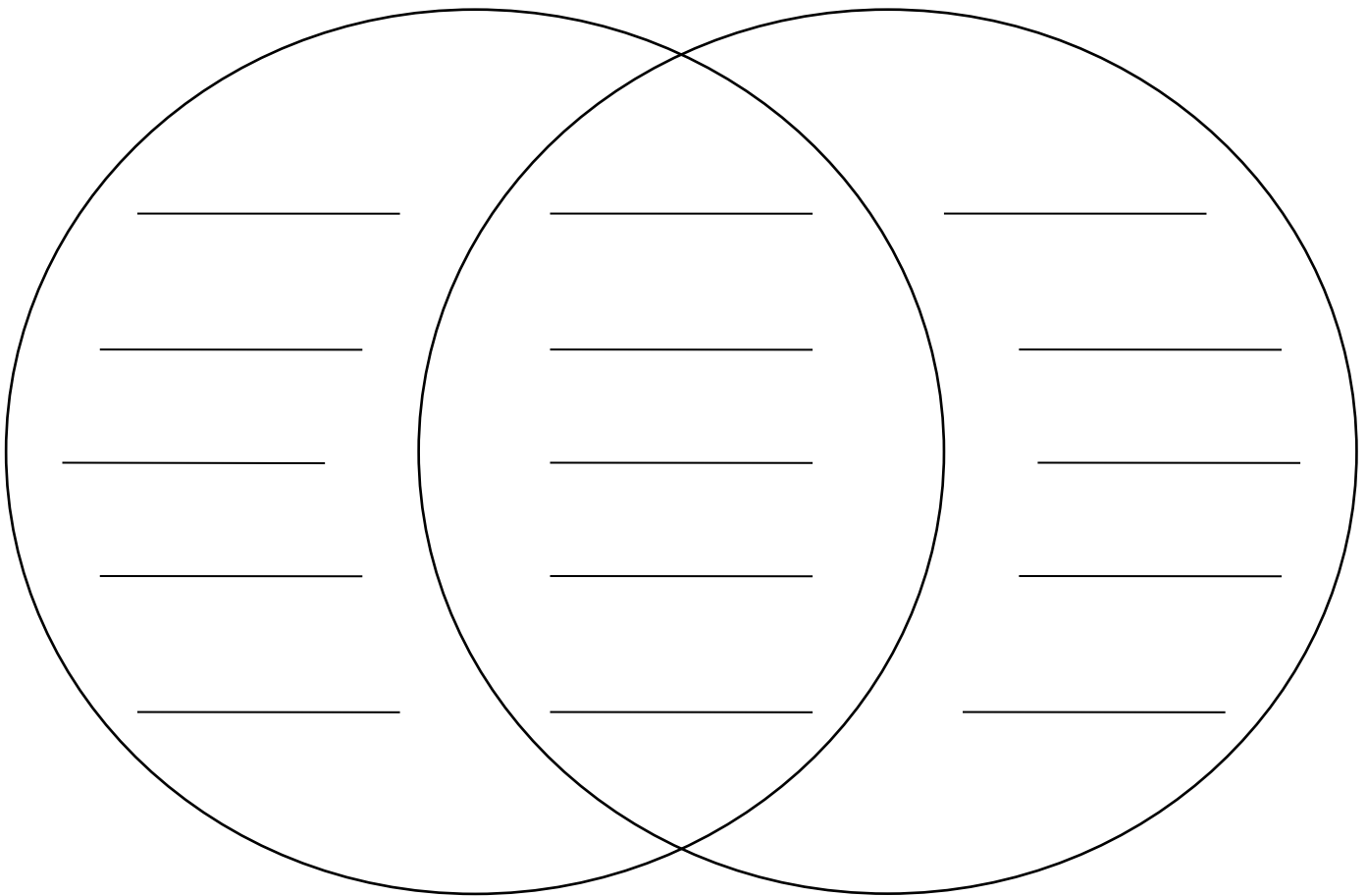
Venn Diagram

Name: _____

Date: _____

_____ is special, because we have similarities;
_____ is special, because we have differences.

_____’s characteristics Our Similarities _____’s characteristics



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"God's Eye Chart"

So from

now on we

regard no one from

a human point of view

according to worldly standards and values

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

2 Corinthians 5:16

You are special: unique, important, and created for a purpose.

Name: _____

Date: _

My Hand



WOW!

30,000,000,000,000

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Spiritual Gift Survey for Kids¹

This check list is created to help elementary age children discover their spiritual gifts as presented in Romans 12: 6-8 of God's Word. Read the following 49 questions to your child and answer by choosing one of the five following responses:

Never (1), Seldom (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Always (5)

1. I see things as being either right or wrong, good or evil.	
2. I love to work with my hands, and I'm good at it.	
3. I find great joy in learning.	
4. I love to talk almost all the time.	
5. Giving to others makes me joyful.	
6. I get great joy from accomplishing something.	
7. I get sad and angry when bad things happen to people.	
8. I am frank and outspoken.	
9. I find great joy in helping others.	
10. I love teaching people about things.	
11. I am very happy and have a balanced personality.	
12. I do everything with all my heart.	
13. I thrive on competition; I always want to be 1st or best.	
14. I look for the good in people and ignore the bad.	
15. I tend to be a little negative.	
16. I am usually shy and easily embarrassed.	
17. It's easy for me to speak and to express my thoughts clearly.	
18. I like to tell people "good job".	
19. I am very imaginative.	
20. It's very important that my friends are loyal to me.	
21. I find great joy in showing love to someone who is hurting.	
22. I feel that I am right most of the time.	
23. I like helping others before I help myself.	
24. I have strong convictions and opinions.	
25. I have a very positive outlook on life.	
26. I do not have a lot of friends, just a few best friends.	
27. I enjoy leading and telling others what to do.	
28. I am eager to please and be obedient.	
29. I get angry when people break the rules and get away with it.	
30. I like to keep my room tidy and neat.	
31. I love explaining the whole story to people.	
32. I notice what people can do well and I tell them.	
33. I like to save money rather than spend it.	

¹ Can be downloaded free: ncckidz.com/.../2015/07/92739299-youth-spiritual-gifts-test-1.pdf

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34. I'm good at expressing myself; I love to speak in class.	
35. I enjoy peace and try to avoid conflict.	
36. I tend to be strong willed and stubborn.	
37. It's hard for me to say no when people ask for my help.	
38. I am very independent.	
39. I love helping people know how to solve their problems.	
40. I am good at making money.	
41. I am confident and enthusiastic.	
42. I find it hard to stand up and defend myself.	
43. I want to be obedient and feel guilty when I'm disobedient.	
44. I like doing really nice projects for people.	
45. I think I know more than many of my friends.	
46. I get along well with my parents, neighbors, and friends.	
47. I quickly help when I see a need.	
48. I love leading and organizing when I'm in a group.	
49. I prefer playing in non-competitive sports.	

To determine which gift(s) you might have, add up the following numbers under each gift below and calculate your results. The gift(s) with the largest number may indicate your particular spiritual gift.

Prophecy (Perceiver)

Characteristics – **Discerning, judging, sensitive**

Add the totals for question 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 36, 43 **total=** _____

Serving

Characteristics – **Practical, observant, detailed**

Add the totals for question 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 37, 44 **total=** _____

Teaching

Characteristics – **Logical, systematic, factual**

Add the totals for question 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 38, 45 **total=** _____

Exhortation (Encouragement)

Characteristics – **Edifying, positive, expectant**

Add the totals for question 4, 11, 18, 25, 32, 39, 46 **total=** _____

Giving

Characteristics – **Generous, hospitable, resourceful**

Add the totals for question 5, 12, 19, 26, 33, 40, 47 **total=** _____

Leadership (Administration)

Characteristics – **Thorough, organized, responsible**

Add the totals for question 6, 13, 20, 27, 34, 41, 48 **total=** _____

Mercy (Compassion)

Characteristics – **Emotional, personal, joyful**

Add the totals for question 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49 **total=** _____

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"4 Tricks for No Stick" Method from YAS MCG

Remind-Decide-Ask-Act

1) Remind

Everyday you should **remind** yourself that you are special; that you are unique, of great importance, and made for a particular purpose.

2) Decide

Everyday you should **decide** that you will determine your value and not let the judgment of others determine it.

3) Ask



When people try to give you stars or dots, you should **ask** yourself the following three *questions*:

- What is true about this star/dot?
- What can I learn from this star/dot?
- What should I do with this star/dot?

4) Act

Decide if there is any additional **action** you need to take in order for the star or dot not to stick.

"Question" Exercise

 Star or Dot (Real-Life)	Question 1 What is true about this star/dot?	Question 2 What can I learn from this star/dot?	Question 3 What should I do with this star/dot?
			

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Additional Biblical Resource

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"A Biblical View of Human Worth"

The purpose of this document is to communicate the Christian view of the worth of all people. This document has three major sections. Section 1 discusses the worth of all people, including those who are not Christians and have had no opportunity to hear the gospel. Section 2 asks how one can find a common basis to uphold the value of human life with those who do not hold a Christian worldview. This section is particularly written for Christians who work together with non-religious organizations. Section 3 shares the Biblical teaching on the worth of the Christian. The following are the major headings of this document:

Section 1: A Christian view of the worth of all people

Section 2: Advocating the worth of all people with those who do not accept a Christian world view

Section 3: The worth of the Christian

Part A: Where does their worth come from?

Part B: Moving God's truth from the mind to the spirit

Part C: But isn't the self sinful, wicked, and worthless?

Section 1: A Christian view of the worth of all people

The Bible teaches the great value of all people, regardless of their relationship to God or their awareness of the gospel. God deems all people to be of great worth primarily because He has created them in His image.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God repeatedly states how deeply He loves all people, regardless of their awareness of Him.

Jonah 4:11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

God expresses love for those who are in the midst of rebellion against Him.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is...patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

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Luke 23:34 Jesus said of those who were crucifying him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

All peoples of the world are so valuable to God the Father that He would allow His Son Jesus to die on their behalf.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

While God will execute judgment on all who do not know Christ, this judgment is not something that brings Him joy.

Ezekiel 33:11 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is...patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God values all people regardless of their gender, age, wealth, race, talent, and exposure to His church and His Word. God loves children.

Matthew 18:10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Matthew 19:14 Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

God loves women as well as men.

John 11:5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

God equally loves people of all races.

Acts 10:34-35 God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

Revelation 5:9 You were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

God loves the poor as well as the rich.

Luke 6:20 Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

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Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

What has been shared so far indicates the great worth God places on the life of each person. However, a holistic view of mankind requires that one also understands how deeply sin has touched each person. One must understand the judgment of God that resides upon all people because of sin.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men.

This in no way keeps the Christian from acting in loving ways toward all men, even those who do not know God. God Himself acts in loving ways toward non-Christians and commands that Christians do the same.

Matthew 5:44-45 Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Section 2: Advocating the worth of all people with those who do not accept a Christian world view

Many Christians work in corporate, academic, and non-profit entities that do not hold to a Christian worldview. People at these organizations or in government may not have a belief in God, the Bible, or even the immortal souls of men. The Christian passionately says to everyone, "You are loved and valuable," based on a biblical worldview. How can a Christian advocate the worth of all people to those who do not accept Christian teaching as an authority?

There are ways a Christian can advocate the worth of all people, and they have more to do with experience and emotion than with propositional logic. Everyone has an innate sense that all people have significance. That innate sense is not equally strong in everyone. People are all conditioned by their cultures, families of origin, experiences, and sin. As a result, some people struggle to find worth with certain ethnic groups, children, women, the physically disabled, the poor, perceived

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enemies, and so on. Yet, there is a sense that, even for an ethnic group that is perceived as an enemy, their own families and countrymen will find value in them.

Christians can appeal to this innate sense of value by sharing their own love for those perceived to be of little worth. Pictures and videos are tools that can evoke positive emotional responses. Sometimes those who have little in the way of emotional attachment to people have developed a strong bond with a pet. They understand their animal has accomplished nothing in the way of education, work, or personal attainment; yet, they have developed a strong emotional bond with their pet. Love for God's creation at any level can become a springboard that leads to love for people.

Sometimes the goal of a Christian organization is to receive permission or funding to do a particular charitable work. Some parties involved may not see the value of human life, but there may be political or economic advantages for them to allow the charitable work to happen. Many governments and businesses realize that caring for the needy gives them a good public image. While this is not all a Christian hopes for, such passive acknowledgment of human significance may be enough to allow them to accomplish their intended ministries.

One powerful way to proclaim the value of human life is charitable works by Christians. When Christian people voluntarily serve complete strangers that have nothing to offer them, they send a powerful message to non-Christians who are watching. Their generosity does not fit inside the mindset of anyone whose life values are materialism or power. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." The selfless love of Christians for undesirable people raises a huge question mark in the hearts of onlookers. They will naturally wonder the reason for the generosity, which then leaves the door open for the believer to share about the unconditional love of God.

Section 3: The worth of the Christian

The Bible speaks of the worth of all people, which was addressed in Section 1. Because of the Fall and the entrance of sin into the world, mankind has fallen under the judgment of God. The image of God is still a part of all people, but it has been marred by sin. All people have great worth in the eyes of God, but all people also are under the judgment of God because of sin.

This is not true for the Christian who has been forgiven and made new in Christ. The Bible has far more to say about the worth of the Christian than it has to say about the worth of mankind in general. There is abundant reason, based on biblical truth, for every Christian to understand their worth before God and to have a healthy self-concept.

Because this section is longer, it is divided into three parts. **Part A** asks where one's sense of worth ought to come from. **Part B** discusses how one can transform

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these truths into personal experience. **Part C** asks, "Isn't the self evil and sinful? Shouldn't one put the self to death instead of discussing its worth?"

Part A: Where does one's worth come from?

Everyone searches for worth and meaning in life based on something. What they choose to value will determine whether they are able to attain a sense of worth. If they believe that human worth is determined by beauty, intelligence, wealth, or status, they will believe they have worth to the extent they have those things. To the extent they do not have those things, they will feel worthless and insignificant.

The battleground for significance is in the *mind*. What one *believes* determines what they *value*, and what they *value* determines what they *feel* about themselves and others. The Bible stresses that a person's beliefs determine their values:

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Romans 12:2-3 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

To truly understand one's worth, a person must value the things God values. They must see themselves through his eyes.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 This is what the LORD says, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

1 Samuel 16:7 The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

2 Corinthians 10:12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

Having an understanding of one's significance in Christ does not result in pride. Rather, one learns that fellow Christians are as loved and valued by God as they are. God's goal is not that one becomes lifted up in pride or that one despises themselves. His goal is that one loves themselves the same as they love others.

Matthew 23:39 Love your neighbor as yourself.

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Ephesians 5:28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

The Christian should not believe that they are more important than others or that others are more important than them. Jesus commands everyone to love others *as* they love themselves. Understanding one's significance in Christ helps one to understand the value of others' lives as well as their own.

Part B: Moving God's truth from the mind to the spirit

One does not need to be a Christian very long to know that God loves them. The Bible repeatedly confirms God's vast love for Christians. No Christian would dispute this love. Yet many Christians do not have a sense of feeling loved by God. Some Christians have hearts filled with guilt and shame because of their sins and failures. Others see God the Father as a great philanthropist who generously gives eternal life but may not particularly *like* them. One may be ready to acknowledge the love of God in their minds but may not have come to the point where it creates a sense of feeling loved in their hearts.

God *wants* the Christian to be deeply aware of his passionate emotional love for them. In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul prayed:

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul is writing to a group of people who are already believers. Paul wants the Ephesians—and all the saints—to grasp the love of Christ in a manner that surpasses head knowledge. God wants all Christians everywhere to experience God's love in their hearts. The Apostle John expresses the same thing:

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

When many Christians think of entering into God's presence, they do not imagine joyfully coming before a loving Father. They have hearts full of fear, shame, and inadequacy. Why? John says these Christians have not been made perfect in love. It has already been clarified that these Christians are completely forgiven, adopted into the family of God, and passionately loved by the Father. Yet their hearts are dominated by fear, not by joy and peace.

Why are many Christians full of fear and shame? Because they are more emotionally in touch with their own flaws than they are the truth of whom they are

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in Christ. God wants Christians to experience His love in a way that surpasses their experiences of pain and loss.

God tells Christians His intensely passionate love for them is not something they will experience once they improve themselves, but something they will experience just as they are today. God was speaking about the Prodigal Son, not the compliant brother, when He said in Luke 15:20 and 15:10:

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him....there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

This is how God and His angels feel about someone who has made a complete mess of his life. God's passionate love is not earned by the diligent work of the obedient Christian; it is the birthright of every child of God.

So how can one take the truths that are in their mind and move them 18 inches south into their heart? Jesus said in John 15:9, "Abide in My love." If one's Christian experience is only composed of hard work, they will only experience God's love on a rational level. Warmth and compassion in marriage is maintained by regular, consistent expression of affection for one another. Maintaining the warmth of that relationship requires time and affection from both persons. God extends his passionate love to Christians every day. Christians must make it a priority to abide in Christ's love. This means inviting the love of God to fill those areas of life where the deepest hurt and loss are felt. Experiencing God's love in one's heart is not a one-time event. Like a healthy marriage, it is something that is able to grow in stages over time.

Part C: But isn't the self sinful, wicked, and worthless?

Some object to an emphasis on the worth of the Christian because of what the Bible teaches about the sinfulness of human nature. There are passages that can be mistaken to say that human beings are worthless because of their rebellion against God. Some have concluded that it is the duty of the Christian to eradicate the self, not to find the value of the self. The following are some passages that speak clearly about the wickedness of the human heart:

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

Romans 7:23-25 I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

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Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone."

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.

Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.

Some Christians misunderstand passages like these to say that their self is by nature valueless and needs to be eradicated. They believe that somehow God and themselves (or possibly just God alone) work together to destroy "me" so that a new, Christ-centered being can come into existence.

It feels awkward to embrace the worth of the believer while at the same time comprehending the wickedness of human nature as taught by the verses above. It feels as if both cannot be true.

It is helpful to understand four chronological stages of human nature. First is the **innocent** self, the way God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Second is the **fallen** self. This refers to the condition of mankind after the Fall and continues to describe all non-Christians today. Third is the **redeemed** self. This refers to all born-again Christians in this life. Christians have a reborn, transformed nature yet still struggle with that fallen side of themselves that still lives within. Fourth is the **glorified** self, the Christian in heaven who is perfected and no longer has any inclination toward sin. The following will look at each of these one by one:

1. The innocent self: This refers to the way Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Despite the Fall, the image of God remains in all people. This leads Christians to affirm the value of all human life, as was discussed in Section One.

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2. The *fallen self*: The sin of Adam and Eve brought corruption and death to all of their descendants. Mankind stands separated from God because of sin and its effects.

Ephesians 4:17-18 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Romans 3:9-10 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one."

Because of the Fall, all people have hearts that are inclined away from God. They are not able to please God. This fallen self is at war with God, and this self must be put to death to enter into a right relationship with God.

Romans 8:7-9 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

3. The *redeemed self*: When a person comes to faith in Christ, he is reborn—born again. God gives birth to a new nature that did not exist prior to salvation. The qualities of a believer, listed below, are true of every redeemed person whether they have been believers for days or years, whether they are living in or out of fellowship with God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Romans 6:2-4 We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

The redeemed self is no longer controlled by sin, Satan, and death. However, in this life the redeemed Christian still has the evil desires of the fallen self within. There is a lifelong battle against the sinful desires of the evil nature and the godly desires of the redeemed nature. This results in Christians being torn between two passions and two allegiances. It feels like an internal civil war.

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Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:18-19 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

When one affirms the worth of the Christian, they are referring to the *redeemed* self. It is very correct to say that the *fallen* self is in rebellion against God and must be put to death. As a result, one must hold to two complementary views of the nature of the Christian. On the one hand, every Christian has a *redeemed* nature that is of great value. At the same time, every Christian also has a *fallen* nature that is in opposition to God and must be resisted, as was just seen.

Many hold to an imbalanced view of the believer that emphasizes one part of his nature over the other. Those who de-emphasize the *fallen* nature can hold to a view of Christianity that does not compel the Christian to righteous living. Those who de-emphasize the *redeemed* nature can have a self-loathing faith that sees Christian growth as a constant process of hating and eradicating one's self. A healthy, holistic view of the Christian is acutely aware of both sides of his nature.

Part 4: The *glorified* self: This will be the state of every Christian in heaven. Upon death, the fallen nature will be finally eradicated by God. Not only will one not sin any more, but they will not be capable of being tempted.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 2:16-17 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Hebrews 12:23 You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.