

Identity HS| GOD FULFILLS YOUR TRUE DESIRES

VRFD

Everywhere students look, someone's asking them to prove who they are—through likes, achievements, or belonging to the right crowd. But God already knows and verifies their worth. This series helps students trade the pressure to perform for the peace of being known and loved by the One who made them. Our prayer is that by the end of this series, students will find their confidence not in what others say, but in who God says they are.

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Purpose, Identity, Mission

RESPONSE

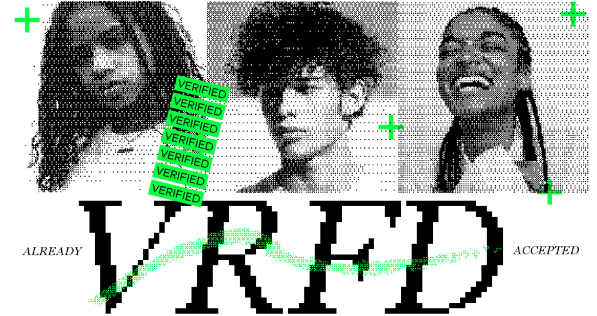
Confidence, Truth

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS

God, Self

MEMORY VERSE

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10 NIV).



Bottom Line

GOD FULFILLS YOUR TRUE DESIRES

Topic

Identity

Scripture

Psalm 23:1–3 (NIV):

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake."*

25 min

Teaching

5 min

Introduction (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Tension (WE)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Truth (GOD)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Application (YOU)

Say: "Picture a birthday plan that falls apart because everyone else's life moved faster than yours. Or a tryout, audition, or application that looked perfect for you and still said no. You wanted that relationship, that job, that chance—and it didn't happen. You thought God forgot. Maybe He was protecting you. Psalm 23 opens with this: *'The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing'* (Psalm 23:1 NIV). If God is leading and seeing the whole path, then what I need most today is not missing.

Say: "Waiting is loud. You refresh a text thread and nothing. You see friends hanging out, and you weren't invited. You scroll through success stories and feel two steps behind. It's easy to translate those moments into 'I'm not enough' or 'God's not paying attention.' The gap between what we want and what we have can mess with how we see ourselves and how we see God."

Read Psalm 23:1–3 (NIV):

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake."*

Say: "A shepherd knows, guides, and provides. David is not saying life is perfect. He is saying that with God as my Shepherd, I'm not empty. He restores my soul. He leads me along the right paths at the right time. God's not slow, He's smart. He gives what we truly need when we actually need it, and He leads us away from what will shrink our soul even if it looks good in the moment.

"Desires aren't the enemy. They're part of being human. They also change as you grow. The stuff you wanted at 13 isn't what you want at 18, and that's growth. Part of following the Shepherd is letting Him mature your wants so they line up with life that lasts, not just life that trends."

Say: "Be honest about one thing that feels missing right now. Name it in one sentence. Now make a short provision list. Write down three ways God is already providing for you this week: people who show up,

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Landing (ME)**What You Need**

No supplies needed

30 min

Groups

5 min

Think About This**What You Need**

No supplies needed

15 min

Discussion Questions

help you have, opportunities in front of you, small wins that are easy to overlook. Thank Him for those out loud. Next, write one step of trust to take: a prayer you'll pray, a conversation you'll start, or a choice you'll make that says "I believe You're my Shepherd here."

Group Reflection Say: "Take sixty seconds. Write what you want right now, then circle what actually lasts past high school. Share one line with a trusted friend or leader if you want to. No pressure. The goal isn't to feel bad about wanting things. It's to notice which wants are worth building a life on and which ones need to be held loosely while you follow the Shepherd."

Say: "God isn't asking you to pretend you don't want anything. He's inviting you to trust Him with what you want while you thank Him for what you already have. When the envy voice shows up, answer with Psalm 23 and your provision list. With your Shepherd, you're not behind and you're not forgotten. You're led. Each day, add one line to your provision list and one honest sentence telling God what you want. Keep it where you'll see it. Let your list train your heart to notice the ways your Shepherd is already at work today."

"Let's pray. Jesus, my Shepherd, You see my whole path. Thank You for what You've already provided today. I give You the desire I'm carrying and the part that feels missing. Lead me in what is right, restore my soul, and teach me to trust You with what I want while I walk in what I need. Guide me this week, one step at a time. Amen."

The goal of this discussion is to help students move from envy and anxiety to grounded trust: naming what feels missing, noticing present provision, and taking one specific step of faith with a safe person. We want them to see that with their Shepherd, they are not empty, even while they wait.

High schoolers live with constant comparison. They can feel stuck on "read," left out, and scrolling through everyone else's wins. Remind them: Desires aren't the enemy, but they mature over time. God's not slow—He's smart. He gives what we truly need when we actually need it and leads us away from what shrinks our soul, even if it looks good in the moment.

1. Warm-up: name one small win or way God provided this week (a person who showed up, help you had, an opportunity, a tiny relief). (Leader note: Easy on-ramp. One sentence each. Model gratitude without forcing spiritual jargon.)

What You Need

No supplies needed

10 min

Try This**What You Need**

No supplies needed

2. Where is waiting the loudest for you right now—being left on read, not getting invited, roster spots, auditions, applications, job shifts—and what story do you tell yourself in that moment?
(Leader note: Normalize the pressure. Redirect shame. Keep specifics safe.)
3. Read Psalm 23:1–3 together. Which phrase stands out—"my shepherd," "I have what I need," "restores my soul," "leads me"—and why?
(Leader note: Tie identity to who leads, not to outcomes.)
4. Real talk: Name something you wanted that didn't happen. Did it ever feel like God forgot you, and what might it look like if He was actually protecting you.
(Leader note: Avoid blame language. Frame it as a Shepherd who sees the path you can't.)
5. Changing desires: The stuff you wanted at 13 isn't what you want at 18. What's one want that matured for you, and what stayed the same?
(Leader note: Celebrate growth. No mocking past wants.)
6. Reflection practice: take sixty seconds. Write what you want right now, then circle what actually lasts past high school. Share only if you want.
(Leader note: Guard privacy; affirm any honest answer.)
7. Provision + trust: List three ways God is providing today. Thank Him for one out loud. Then name one step of trust you'll take this week and one safe person you'll tell.
(Leader note: Keep it specific and doable. Offer to be the safe person if needed.)

Challenge Statement: "Each day this week, add one line to your provision list and one honest sentence telling God what you want. Keep it where you'll see it. Let that habit train your heart to notice your Shepherd's care while you wait."