

SESSION 01

MY STORY



TRAINER'S GUIDE




Warm Up

RECALL AND PREPARATION

With a large group, interview two or three students in front of the group. In a small group, use two or more of these as opening discussion questions:

- Have you ever heard a person talk about their “calling in life”? What were they talking about?
- Who do you think has a calling: nobody, some people, most people, or everybody? Why do you think that?
- Have you ever thought about whether you have a calling in life or whether you might have one some day?
- What would be the best thing about having a calling in life?

Set Up

The following is a script you can use to teach the opening portion of this session of Younique Students to your group. You can read it out word for word, or you can use it as a basis for making your own remarks in your own style. If you make it your own that way, note the sentences and phrases in boldface as points you especially want to emphasize OR you may use the Younique Students teaching videos that stream for free from  lifeyounique.com/ptv-students (the password is ARROW21). Your group can watch the teaching video all together or watch individually in advance of meeting together.

TEXT: EPHESIANS 2:10

SCRIPTURE AND TEACHING

When you think about yourself, what do you think about? What words would you use to describe yourself? What is the picture of yourself that you carry around in your mind? Take a moment and describe yourself in three words to the person sitting next to you.

Now here is a bigger question, “What do you think would be the words that God would use to describe you?” You may have lots of words floating around your mind right now, but one thing I’ve noticed, when I’ve asked lots of people this question, is that very few people think of the word unique.

Even fewer would use a word like “masterpiece” to describe what they believe God thinks about them. That is why today I want to share with you one big thought that our whole session is really all about—“You are more **unique** than you **think**.” You are a unique person with a unique calling. You are God’s one-of-a-kind divine design. And no matter what you think about yourself, it’s what God thinks about you that makes all the difference. This idea comes from Ephesians 2:10. Listen in as I read it to you.

Let me ask you something: did you notice that it says “we are created in Christ Jesus”? Any idea what that means? **[Take answers.]**

Big Thought

You are more **UNIQUE** than you **THINK**.

Here's what I think is going on. I think that in this verse, Paul is connecting God's story with our story. God's story is that he created every person on earth; he made all of us. But human beings turned away from God to do our own thing—we turned to sin. Suffering and conflict and death is the result. But God sent his Son Jesus to make us right with God again, to bring us home to him, by dying for us on the cross. That's God's story.

Now back to Ephesians 2:10, which connects God's story with the story of each one of us. As I said, God created all people. But if you put your trust in Jesus to be in charge of your life, then as Ephesians 2:10 says, God creates you anew—and he continually re-creates you. He makes you new again from the inside out. As Paul puts it, he makes you into his handiwork.

Have you ever thought of yourself as God's handiwork? Have you ever thought of yourself as a one-of-a-kind work of art that came out of God's genius? Have you ever thought that he saw you as beautiful before you were born? That he is even right now sculpting you into a masterpiece that makes angels' jaws drop?

So what does that have to do with calling? The rest of the sentence tells us: "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Your calling is to do the good works he prepared in advance for you, before he even made the world. So, if you are being re-created in Christ Jesus because you've trusted in him, God prepared good things for you to do. In other words, because you are his handiwork, you have a calling!

So the big question is "**what did God prepare in advance for you to do?**" To warm us up to think about what God prepared for you to do, let's think about what God prepared for everybody to do. Let's think about the good things that we're all supposed to do, no matter who we are, no matter where we live.

In a large group, say, "Take 60 seconds with your neighbor and list good things that God wants all people to do, as many things as you can think of." When the time is up, ask for examples from the group. In a small group, make this a brainstorming exercise for the whole group.

All those good deeds we came up with are the part of your calling that you share with everybody. But let me ask you this: how are you supposed to do those things where you are?

Use examples from the brainstorming period. For instance, if one idea was "be kind to people," say, "Who, specifically, are you called to be kind to? What can you do to be kind to them?"

We don't all have the same answers to these questions—we're all different people living different lives. But God has specific answers for you. Even before you were born, God planned good things that only you can do. That is your special calling, the calling that only you have as God's handiwork.

So how do you go about finding out what God planned for only you to do? Do you just guess? Do you blunder into it and see what happens? A lot of people think so, if they think about it at all. But I have a different point of view. I believe that the Holy Spirit will give us wisdom from God to know what our calling is, to know what he has prepared in advance for us to do. We're going to take the next eight weeks to hear him tell us. But to do this we are going to need to dive into and identify some of the things that make each of us unique. Remember, "You are more unique than you think" and your unique calling is tied directly to the unique way that God has made you. To help illustrate this big thought today, I want to use a picture of an arrow. Like an arrow, we all have several pieces of who we are that when put together properly can make us a person of impact in the world.

ARROW ILLUSTRATION

To illustrate how our calling fits together, we're going to look at an arrow over these eight weeks. In fact, you're going to customize your own arrow as you discover your calling.

The journey to discover your calling has four steps. **[Demonstrate by holding up an arrow and pointing to its parts.]**

First, you're going to discover your **Story**. You're going to see more clearly than ever the path that God has taken you on so far in your life, the high points and the hard times. Story is the arrow shaft (the long, skinny part). It's the basic shape that holds the rest together. That's what the story of your life is: it's the structure that holds your calling together. We'll show you what that means in a little bit.

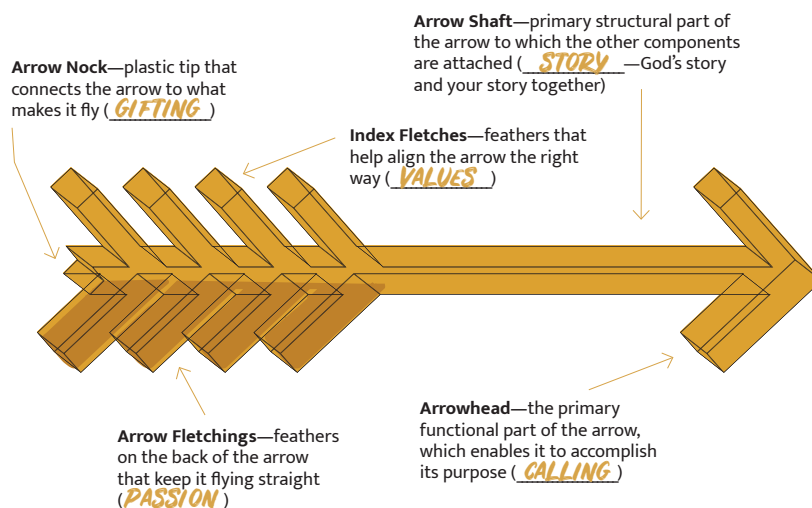
The second thing you're going to discover is your **Gifting**. Your gifting is what God made you to do well. It's the potential you have to be excellent at something. To some of you this is probably really exciting. To others of you it might be intimidating or discouraging—you might think, "I'm not gifted at anything—I'm not like him; I'm not like her." Don't worry: you're going to find out that you're a lot more gifted than you think.

Gifting is the arrow nock—that's that notch on the back end of the arrow. It's the part that connects the arrow to the bow that launches the arrow forward. Think of the bow as the powerful God who empowers you. Your gifting is the connection between you and him that makes you fly in what he has called you to do.

The third step in learning your calling is discovering your **Passion**. Your passion is what you care about most deeply; it's what really matters to you. Passion is like the arrow fletching—that's the word for the feathers. The fletching is what keeps the arrow flying straight; otherwise, no matter how much force you put into it, it will wobble around and won't go very far. Knowing the passion God has put inside you is what keeps you flying in the right direction over the long haul.

The fourth step is to discover your **Calling** itself, what God made you to do with your life. Everything else we're talking about leads up to this. Your calling is like the arrowhead, the pointy part at the end. The purpose of an arrow is to pierce something from far away; that's what it's made to do. Your calling is your purpose; it's what you're made to do.

Finally, you will identify and name your personal **Values**. Your values are deeply held convictions that reveal your character and direct your behavior. Your values are what characterize everything you do as they shape what you expect and desire of yourself.



Step Up

TOOLS AND DISCOVERY

Today you're going to discover your story in a new way. (Remember, story is the arrow shaft part, the structure that holds your calling together.) To discover your story, we're going to start with the Six-Sketch Storyboard.

Six-Sketch Storyboard

1. Brainstorm a list of the moments in your life that have made the biggest impact on the person you are today. Aim for at least ten. To help your brainstorming, name 5 High Points and 5 Hard Times. High Points are moments in which you experienced great joy, satisfaction and/or success. Hard Times are moments in which you experienced deep sadness, conflict and/or loss.
2. Choose the six most significant moments on your list, which can be any combination of high points and hard times, and put them in order from earliest in your life to latest in your life.
3. Draw a simple picture of each of those moments in the order they happened.
4. Think of a title for the six-sketch story you made. Write it across the bottom of the paper.

When you've finished your storyboard, get together with two partners and share stories (3 minutes each). Listen carefully to each other. When a person finishes their story, say something that builds them up—for example:

- Thank you for telling us about your life.
- That great moment in your story must have felt terrific.
- That tough moment in your story must have been sad.

Session 01 - My Story

Ten Moments

Take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of ten moments in your life that have made the biggest impact on the person you are today. This list should include both high points and hard times:

FIVE HIGH POINTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

FIVE HARD TIMES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

After you have listed ten moments, circle the six most important moments. Then write those six in chronological order from the earliest in your life to the latest in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

8 © Younique. All rights reserved. LifeYounique.com

Participant Guide page 8

Session 01 - My Story

Six-Sketch Storyboard

Draw a simple picture of each of the six most impactful moments of your life in the order they happened in the six boxes below.

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	6. _____

Six-Sketch Storyboard Title: _____

10 © Younique. All rights reserved. LifeYounique.com

Participant Guide page 10

CUSTOMIZE YOUR ARROW

To prepare for this exercise, you will need:

Inexpensive practice targeting arrows, one for each student. These are sold in bundles of usually about a dozen for about 50 cents per arrow. They generally have black shafts made of fiberglass or some other kind of plastic.

Dot stickers in a wide diversity of colors. Some vendors sell stickers in a variety pack with dozens of colors.

As we go through this eight-session journey, each of you will have your own arrow that you'll customize as a symbol of what you're learning about the calling God has on your life. Handle it carefully!

Pass out a practice targeting arrow to each student.

For each of the sketches on your storyboard, I want you to think: if you had to represent that sketch with one color, what color would it be? (You're allowed to use the same color for more than one sketch if you want.)

When you have come up with the color for each of your sketches, you can picture a sequence of six colors that tell your story. You're going to put the colors of your story onto your arrow using stickers, like this.

[To demonstrate, hold up an arrow with six colored dot stickers wrapped around its shaft.]



Wrap Up

FORECAST AND CONCLUSION

You're going to leave your arrows here, because we're going to do more with them over the coming weeks. We're not going to put your names on them to tell them apart. You know why? Because they're already labeled with your story. So look closely at the order of colors on your arrow shaft and relate them to your story. That's how you will recognize your arrow next time.

Until next time, there are three things I want to remind you of right now:

1. You are God's masterpiece.
2. If you trust and follow Jesus, God gives you a calling—the good things that only you can do.
3. Knowing your calling comes from knowing your story.

IF YOU WANT TO
IDENTIFY ME, ASK
ME NOT WHERE I
LIVE OR WHAT I
LIKE TO EAT OR HOW
I COMB MY HAIR
BUT ASK ME WHAT
I AM LIVING FOR
THOMAS MERTON

IF YOU WANT TO
IDENTIFY ME, ASK
ME NOT WHERE I
LIVE OR WHAT I
LIKE TO EAT OR HOW
I COMB MY HAIR
BUT ASK ME WHAT
I AM LIVING FOR

THOMAS MERTON