



# #identity

How often have you heard someone described as a wolf in sheep's clothing? The phrase actually originates from Jesus himself in Matthew 7:15 and refers to someone who appears harmless, but their true identity is potentially hurtful.

I've been challenged and encouraged recently by Colossians 3, which talks about how we should "clothe ourselves" with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (verse 12). This provides a great way opening a conversation with your mentee about what their fundamental identity is, and what kind of behaviour they 'clothe' themselves with on top of that, especially when they're online.

Start with a quick game of noughts and crosses on a napkin. Talk the above idea through. Do they think we are a) by nature created good, but often do bad things out of choice or b) inherently bad, but saved by Jesus and learning to do good? Are we a) wolves dressed as sheep or b) sheep who

often act like wolves? Does this show itself more clearly when we're online?

Interestingly, the empty noughts and crosses board looks a lot like a hashtag. On social media it's easy to hide behind a façade and to contrive a profile that appears more exciting, more moralistic, more attractive and more popular than the reality. This can create all kinds of problems for young people: chasing likes and followers; the pressure to produce content or keep up appearances; and the desire to be something they are not.

Draw a noughts and crosses board or big hashtag shape. For every 'nought', name a bad online habit we struggle with. For each of the 'crosses', name an online behaviour we should strive to adopt. Ideally, you should end up with a working diagram to express specific areas for your mentee to work on and pray about over the coming weeks.

Use the opportunity to talk about how they view themselves and how they think God views them. How can we succeed at behaving in the right way online?

The Colossians passage describes us as a "royal priesthood". The truth is that we are

not wolves (bad / evil / sinful) but sheep. Our base identity is good. God has made us holy and pleasing to him through Jesus. This is absolutely key. We must know our true identity first, as the corresponding behaviour comes afterwards.

Draw another hashtag and have them write 'identity' next to it. Talk through ways we can be more aware of our true identity while online. What you want is for the mentee to attach a new significance to the familiar shape of the hashtag. Suggest that every time they see a hashtag online to remember the good, holy, royal identity we already have in Jesus.

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