

youthESource Bible Study

The Labels We Wear

By Mary Rowley

Main Point: We try to cover up our sins, but we don't need to; Jesus already has.

Characters (all can be either male or female)

Stephan/Stephanie
Friend
Teacher
Coach

Props

Adhesive labels (detailed below)
Sharpie for each character
Paper that says "A+" for Teacher
Soccer ball for Coach

Labels

Friend, Teacher, and Coach need 2 blank labels each
Stephan/Stephanie needs 3 blank labels, along with prewritten labels on shirt – "smart", "kind", "loved", "funny", "pride and joy", "pretty much okay"
Friend needs 5 prewritten labels in his/her jacket pocket – "loved", "saved", "child of God", "chosen", "never alone"

Costumes

2 t-shirts that say "sinner", one for Stephan/Stephanie and one for Friend
Stephan/Stephanie's will be covered up by labels
1 zip-up jacket for Friend

*Stephan/Stephanie enters, wearing a lot of labels; he/she is also carrying some labels and a Sharpie.
Friend enters, wearing a zipped-up jacket and carrying two labels and a Sharpie.*

Stephan/ie I'm worried about the math test we took yesterday.

Friend Why would you worry, Stephan/Stephanie? You're a genius.

Friend writes "genius" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Stephan/ie Yeah, but what if I get a low grade? I don't want to miss out on soccer because my grades are bad.

Friend That's not going to happen. You're the best forward we've got. No teacher is going to fail you!

Friend writes "best forward" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Stephan/ie Okay, okay. You're probably right. I just can't stop thinking about the test.

Friend You don't need to worry. You're going to be fine.

Friend gives Stephan/Stephanie a hug and exits. Stephan/Stephanie watches Friend leave, then writes "worrier" on a label and sticks it on himself/herself. Teacher enters, carrying a piece of paper marked with a big A+, along with two labels and a Sharpie. Teacher hands the paper to Stephan/Stephanie.

Teacher A plus! You're my shining star in this class.

Teacher writes "shining star" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Stephan/ie Thank you! I was really worried about this test.

Teacher You didn't need to worry. You're one of the best students I've ever had, Stephan/Stephanie. In fact, I wanted to talk to you about becoming a math teacher yourself. You're smart, patient, and helpful. You would make a great math teacher.

Teacher writes "smart, patient, and helpful" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Stephan/ie Thank you, but I'm not sure if I would be good at that.

Teacher Think about it, okay?

Stephan/ie Okay. I will.

Teacher pats Stephan/Stephanie on the back and exits. Stephan/Stephanie watches Teacher leave, then writes "not sure" on a label and sticks it on himself/herself. Coach enters, carrying a soccer ball, along with two labels and a Sharpie.

Coach Hey there, Stephan/Stephanie! Are you ready for the big game today?

Stephan/ie I think so! I've been practicing extra at home.

Coach That's what I like to hear. You're a hard worker.

Coach writes "hard worker" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Stephan/ie Thanks, Coach.

Coach Have you thought about playing soccer in college?

Stephan/ie I don't know. Do you think I'm good enough?

Coach I think you're more than good enough. I got a call from a recruiter today. Should I tell him you're interested?

Stephan/ie I don't know. Thinking about college is kind of scary.

Coach That's okay. I know you'll do great at college! You're going to be a Division I player before you know it.

Coach writes "Division I player" on a label and sticks it on Stephan/Stephanie.

Coach I'll see you at the game!

Coach gives Stephan/Stephanie a high-five and exits. Stephan/Stephanie watches Coach leave, then writes "scared" on a label and sticks it on himself/herself. Stephan/Stephanie begins to talk to the audience, taking off labels and dropping them as he/she talks.

Stephan/ie Everyone says I'm really great. They say I'm a genius, the best forward on the soccer team, the shining star of the math class, smart and patient and helpful, a hard worker, a future Division I soccer player... here are some of the labels my parents have given me, smart and kind and loved and funny. My grandparents say I'm their pride and joy. My brother says I'm pretty much okay.

But I know differently.

Stephan/Stephanie sits heavily in a chair and begins to pull off the negative labels.

Stephan/ie I'm a worrier. I worry all the time, about everything. The reason I'm a good soccer player and good at math and all of those things is because I worry so much about them. I spend hours doing extra math problems and soccer drills because I'm worried about where I'll be if I don't do those things.

I'm just not sure about the future. In fact, I'm scared of it. My math teacher wants me to follow in his/her footsteps. My coach wants me to play college soccer. My parents and grandparents just want me to be happy. But what can the future hold for someone like me? All of those labels that other people give me – they just cover up what's underneath.

Stephan/Stephanie pulls off the last label to reveal the word "sinner" on his/her shirt.

Stephan/ie This one isn't a label. It's just a fact. I'm a sinner. I try to hide it, I try to cover it up, I try to make up for it with school and sports and everything else, but I always know that it's still there, and there's nothing I can do about it. I can't stop sinning. I can't be perfect.

I've gotten labels from all kinds of people. Friends, family, teachers, coaches. But the only thing I've gotten from God is "sinner." And that is the most important one of all. If "sinner" is all he can say, then that's all I really am.

Stephan/Stephanie puts his/her head in his/her hands. He/she doesn't notice when Friend re-enters and sits in the next chair. After a minute, Friend speaks, and Stephan/Stephanie is startled.

Friend What's wrong?

Stephan/ie Oh! You're back!

Friend Of course I am. We're going to the big game, remember?

Stephan/ie Oh. Right.

Friend But we don't need to go yet. Are you all right?

Stephan/ie Yes, of course I am. I'm just fine.

Stephan/Stephanie begins to pick up all the labels and haphazardly try to reapply them.

Friend What are you doing?

Stephan/ie I don't want you to see what I am.

Friend What do you mean?

Stephan/ie You wouldn't want to be my friend if you knew what I was really like!

Friend I don't get it. I know what you're like.

Stephan/ie Not really! I'm always trying to be perfect, but I'm not. I'm not perfect.

Friend Well, of course you're not! You're pretty great, don't get me wrong, Stephan/Stephanie, but of course you're not perfect. None of us are.

Stephan/ie But I'm worse. I'm worse than everyone else.

Stephan/Stephanie stops trying to reapply the labels and shows Friend what is written on his/her shirt.

Friend It says you're a sinner.

Stephan/ie Exactly!

Friend unzips his/her jacket and shows Stephan/Stephanie that "sinner" is also written on his/her shirt.

Stephan/ie You too?

Friend Yep.

Stephan/ie And it doesn't bother you?

Friend Sometimes it does.

Stephan/ie And what do you do? Do you try to cover it up? Do you study more? Do you do extra practice drills? Do you—

Friend *(interrupts)* No, no, no. I don't have to do anything. God has already taken care of it.

Stephan/ie What on earth do you mean? God says that I'm a sinner. That's the end of the story. That's it. I'm hopeless. I'm worthless.

Friend No, you're not, Stephan/Stephanie. Your hope and your worth aren't found in math or soccer, or even your family and friends. Your hope and your worth are found in Jesus.

Stephan/ie But I'm a sinner!

Friend Jesus knows that, and He still loves you.

Friend picks up the negative labels.

Friend Jesus knows that you worry. Jesus knows that you're not sure about the future, and that you're scared because of your sins. He still loves you. You and I are both sinners, but that doesn't mean Jesus doesn't love us. He loves us so much that He died for us.

That's what gives us hope. That's what gives us worth. We may be sinners, but when God looks at us, that's not what He sees.

Stephan/ie What does He see?

Friend He sees Jesus.

Stephan/ie He sees Jesus?

Friend That's right. Jesus' blood covers us. It can be hard for us to see, but God always sees it. When He looks at us, He doesn't see our sins – He sees His perfect Son who sacrificed Himself for us. We're covered, Stephan/Stephanie. We don't need to do anything. Jesus did it all.

Stephan/ie I'm a sinner... but Jesus loves me?

Friend That's right.

Stephan/ie Are you sure?

Friend There's no doubt in my mind. We look at ourselves and we see all the labels people have given us. We see that we're sinners, and we can't stop being sinners. But our true hope and worth are found in Christ alone.

Stephan/ie But what if I'm still not sure? What if I'm still scared? What if I still worry all the time?

Friend Those things aren't going to go away entirely until Jesus comes back. But can I tell you what I like to do?

Stephan/ie Sure.

Friend I used to find myself putting negative labels on. I would write things like "stupid" and "alone" and "always wrong." But that's not what God sees. That's not who Jesus made us to be. So I started writing different kinds of labels, and putting them on when I was feeling the weight of my sins.

Friend pulls pre-written labels from jacket pocket and hands them to Stephan/Stephanie.

Friend Here. I think you need them more than I do today.

Friend gets up and gives Stephan/Stephanie a hug.

Friend I'll see you at the game tonight.

Stephan/ie Okay. Thank you, friend.

Friend You're welcome, Stephan/Stephanie.

Friend exits. Stephan/Stephanie reads the labels out loud.

Stephan/ie Loved. Saved. Child of God. Chosen. Never alone.

Stephan/Stephanie sticks the labels on himself/herself and stands up, talking to the audience again.

Stephan/ie I am a sinner. That's a fact, and I can't change it. But I'm also a child of God, loved, saved, chosen, and never alone, and those are all facts, too. My sins are covered by the blood of Jesus. That's what God sees and that will never change. I don't have to work extra hard. I don't have to be perfect. Jesus was perfect, and that is all I really need. My hope and worth are found in Christ alone.

Stephan/Stephanie exits, leaving all of the other labels behind.