Before She Arrived

Acceptance · Story 4

Belonging in Christ before usefulness

45-minute session · About 20 minutes to prepare

Story-based Bible discussions for older teens and adults (16+).

Help participants consider God’s loving purpose and adoption through Jesus Christ, and practice contributing and receiving without making usefulness the price of belonging.

Read Ephesians 1:3–6 (NIV) on BibleGateway

By the end of the session

• Identify God’s action, Christ’s place and freely given grace in Ephesians 1:3–6.

• Distinguish spiritual acceptance through Christ from a group’s human welcome or the work someone performs.

• Compare Jade’s choices and choose one bounded step toward receiving company, honesty or support.

Before your group meets

• Read Ephesians 1:3–6 NIV through the BibleGateway link. Notice choosing in Christ, adoption through Jesus, holiness and grace.

• Preview the narrated attend / honest / receive route and the three choice comparisons. Earlier Acceptance stories are not required.

• Choose three discussion questions. Print page 4 for participants and bring pens. Allow people to discuss Jade or pass on personal sharing.

A 45-minute plan

Time	Lead the group through
0–4 min	Welcome and open
4–9 min	Read and observe Scripture
9–23 min	Watch one complete route
23–33 min	Discuss the theme
33–41 min	Explore a choice
41–45 min	Reflect and close

Watch the story · Read and make choices · Open this guide online

Lead the conversation

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Open with this question

What helps someone feel welcome before they have done anything useful?

Personal sharing is optional; discuss Jade or pass. Use the 45-minute video plan, or allow 55 minutes for interactive reading.

Read and observe Scripture

Read Ephesians 1:3–6 (NIV) on BibleGateway

Paul praises God for blessings in Christ: a loving purpose before creation, adoption through Jesus, grace freely given, and a holy life. The group's welcome illustrates belonging without creating spiritual standing.

Who gives, through whom, and toward what kind of life?

Discuss and connect · 10 minutes

Choose three questions. Invite observations from the Scripture passage and the story.

1. What does preparing the room protect Jade from? What does removing her chair cost her?

2. Why does company feel riskier than another job?

3. What grounds acceptance in Ephesians 1:3–6? Where does holiness fit?

4. What do Nia, Marcus and Elena show about contributing and receiving?

5. How can honesty and privacy fit together? What changes when Jade accepts support?

6. Where might these choices appear in school, work or a team? What kindness could someone receive?

Keep these distinctions clear

• A group's welcome cannot grant God's adoption through Christ. Work and openness cannot earn grace.

• Honesty can be bounded. Support does not require every private detail; people can discuss Jade or pass.

• Retreat postpones connection. Return remains possible; grace does not depend on instant confidence.

• Family backgrounds differ. Ground adoption in Scripture and allow fictional, school or friendship examples.

Suggested closing prayer

Father, help us receive grace through Christ, accept company with courage, share with wisdom, and be patient with growing trust. Amen.

Explore the choices

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Read a decision aloud. Let pairs name a reasonable motive for each option, then compare its effect on Jade’s connection. Try a brief response a friend could offer without pressure. These consequences concern relationships and pace, not earning God’s acceptance.

Allow about two minutes per decision, then share one observation together. Choices change conversations and consequences; Christ is the foundation of the character’s belonging.

1. How will she accept the invitation?

Jade wants a reason to come that feels safe. Offering more work gives her a familiar role. Attending for company leaves her unsure what she can offer.

Offer to take on more preparation

A familiar helpful role offers protection from feeling exposed.

What happens: Renee explains that the work is covered. Jade still comes, but continues searching for a task and has less practice simply receiving company.

Attend simply for company

Jade wants to accept the actual invitation, despite uncertainty about what she can offer.

What happens: She attends without a supply list and has time to receive company. The discomfort is real; usefulness stops being the entry condition she imposes on herself.

2. How much will she let them know?

The group invites Jade to introduce herself. She can protect her privacy with a polished answer or name one honest part of the pattern she has recognized.

Keep her introduction polished

Accurate, comfortable facts preserve privacy while Jade decides how safe the group feels.

What happens: Renee welcomes her without pressing. The group cannot respond to the fear Jade has not named; she begins a quieter conversation later.

Share one honest part of her story

A small honest disclosure may help others understand the pattern Jade wants to change.

What happens: The group responds without demanding the rest of her history. Connection can deepen sooner while she keeps appropriate boundaries.

3. What will she do with the awkward moment?

Jade feels the urge to leave before she needs anything from the group. She can give herself space or ask someone to remain beside her.

Leave before the conversation deepens

Leaving offers familiar relief from an awkward, exposed moment.

What happens: Jade misses a chance for company and feels lonely at home. She later asks Renee for a quiet conversation and returns with more tentative connection.

Stay and let someone support her

Jade wants to remain present while accepting support at a manageable pace.

What happens: Nia stays beside her, an ordinary conversation begins, and Jade returns with a little more connection. Old loneliness has not disappeared at once.

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Name (optional): _____ Date: _____

Read Ephesians 1:3–6 (NIV) on BibleGateway

You may write about Jade, a fictional example or your own situation. Personal sharing is optional.

1. In Ephesians 1:3–6, what does God give and purpose through Christ?

2. Choose one of Jade's decisions. What understandable fear lies behind each option, and how does the response affect connection?

3. What is one bounded step toward contributing or receiving from a place of acceptance this week?

Take this question with you

Where are you still behaving like a temporary guest in a family God has invited you to join through Christ?

Jade's old loneliness may continue while she begins to trust belonging. Ephesians 1:3–6 grounds a believer's place in God's family in grace through Christ, not indispensability. A human invitation can become a small opportunity to practice receiving.

Choose one appropriate invitation to accept, one small honest thing to share, or one kindness to receive. Keep the step bounded and ask a trusted person for company if that helps.

Read or replay the story
Scan to open the interactive story. Print page 4 for your group.