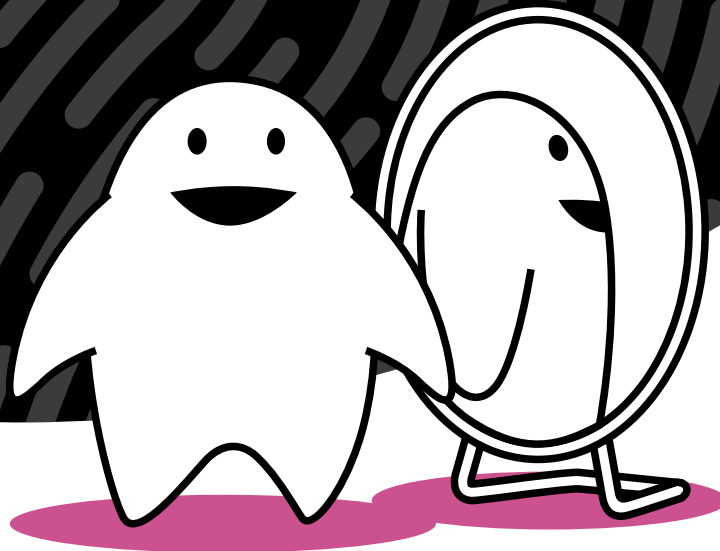


Teaching resources for understanding **identity**



The Bible's answers to our big questions





Lesson 4

I AM GIVEN A BODY

Psalm 139:13-16a • Isaiah 53:2

faith**in****kids**

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Who Am I?

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes and Take Home Sheets use the New International Version.

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Cover design by Alex Webb-Peploe | Illustrators: Magriet Brink & Alex Webb-Peploe | Writing team: Amy Smith, Ed Drew, Cathy Dalton, Rachel Allord & Paula Standal

Living Out (www.livingout.org) commissioned Faith in Kids (www.faithinkids.org) to produce these resources to help children build a permanent identity based on God's word. Visit www.faithinkids.org to download these resources and look out for accompanying podcasts for both children and parents.

'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

I AM GIVEN A BODY

PSALM 139:13-16a, ISAIAH 53:2



Thank you for using a Faith in Kids resource. We want to hear your feedback so we can keep improving our resources. Please [click the link](#) to fill out a short form or email us at info@faithinkids.org



Truth that changes me:

God carefully made each of our bodies wonderfully, as a gift to us.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who value their body as a precious gift from their loving Father.



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Bible tells us that our bodies, including their imperfections, are God's amazing, handmade gifts to us. Jesus, the perfect man, had an ordinary body. This lesson will help children to better understand their body struggles and discover the freedom that comes from using our bodies the way that God intends.

For older children this truth has many implications, including gender identity, gender stereotypes and body image. Stay focused on the **Truth that changes me**, ready to discuss one of these depending on the age and experiences of your group.



THE WORLD OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN

Our culture has a difficult relationship with bodies. We seem to value them highly, parading them (photoshopped) on social media, lavishing them with cosmetics, sculpting them in the gym or having surgery to match the images on our screens. Yet others say, 'I hate my body' or even, 'I'm trapped in the wrong body', as if our bodies were separate from our 'real' selves. Our bodies can be transformed, changed, improved and damaged in an attempt to become the people we want to be.

In our society, and even in our churches, gender stereotypes tell us that children's bodies must be used in certain ways: girls do crafts and boys play football. Is the girl who loves rugby and never wears a dress a 'tomboy', or simply a girl who likes playing sport in a tracksuit? Are we communicating positively and openly about our bodies as God's good gift, or is there a sense of embarrassment as we hide away?

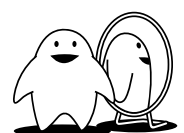
When we stay silent there are casualties. People with imperfections and disabilities are excluded. Eating disorders affect people from an early age.

We want our children to loudly and regularly hear God's loving statement, 'you are fearfully and wonderfully made'. Embracing our bodies as God's good gift to us will transform the way we feel about our own bodies and the way we treat other people's.



NOTES

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read **Where are we going, The world our children live in** and **Look at the passage** to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.





LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

PSALM 139:13

Your handmade body

King David sang about how God made him. Each tiny particle, internal organ and visible detail was lovingly put together by God. No part of our bodies is an accident. Like a home-made jumper with every stitch carefully and deliberately knitted in place, God carefully and purposefully gave you the body you were born with. It's a unique, hand-crafted, work of art by the master craftsman; he didn't give you the wrong one.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

PSALM 139:14

God's amazing gift

God declares that your body is 'wonderfully made'. Rather than disputing his verdict, we are to praise him. Because of the fall, no body is perfect, even King David's, but he still thanked God for it. We honour God's handiwork when we enjoy it, look after it and use it as he intends, avoiding comparison with others.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

ISAIAH 53:2

God's own ordinary body

Jesus showed us what it looked like to be the perfect human. He had an ordinary body. Some people are so good looking that others are drawn to them but there was nothing remarkable about Jesus' looks. Maybe his arms were scrawny, his ears stuck out or he had some wonky teeth. Jesus was not superficially beautiful, but he too had a hand-crafted, lovingly-made body that was a precious, priceless gift from his Father. God places glory in the ordinary: treasures in jars of clay, his eternal son in a human body. If an unspectacular body was good enough for Jesus, why would we think we need more?



WIN MY HEART

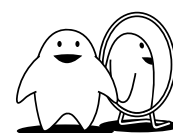
When you look at a photo from a day out, what do you do? Zoom in on yourself? 'I look fat. Why did I wear that? I need a haircut. My teeth look awful!' Or do you delight that you're the best-looking person in the crowd? We easily make snap judgements about ourselves and others, feeding the lie that worth is based on appearance.

Psalms 139 tells us this truth: your actual body - even the bits you would change - is God's careful gift to you. He specifically planned for you to have the body, gender, abilities and limitations you have. Your body is a gift for you to use, enjoy, care for and respect. God cares more about how you use it than how you look in it. So, love the gift he gave you as you use it to glorify him.

- What do you think when you see yourself in the mirror?
- You're 'fearfully and wonderfully made'. Do you believe that or do you feel that's only true for thinner, smarter, stronger or better looking people?
- Your body is a special gift from God. How will you use it for him today?



This truth is for your heart too.





5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

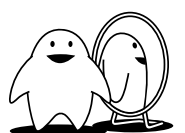
Think about the specific children in your group. Are there any whose bodies cause them particular difficulties, who are often in pain or have additional needs? (Week 3's lesson, 'I am hurting', reminds us that we live in a broken world so sometimes things hurt). Are there any who find their bodies disappointing or even wrong? How will you help them to think of their bodies as a gift from God? Are you ready to be honest about your body and how you feel about it? Are you ready for awkward questions? (You don't have to answer all of them!)



What do the children in your group need?

Pray for them:

- *to grasp the truth*
- *to live it out*
- *to rely on the Spirit*





ALL TOGETHER TIME



Flexible resource: This has been written as an all-age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



PROPS

Gift box, a handmade gift (e.g. a scarf knitted by Grandma or a bird feeder made by a child), mirror, Blu Tack/tape, a football and PowerPoint slides of Psalm 139:13 and Psalm 139:14a.



MAKE IN ADVANCE

2 labels: 'Wonderfully' with a thumbs up emoji and 'Fearfully' with a starry eyed emoji. Place the mirror inside the gift box with the handmade gift on top of it.



HELPERS NEEDED

Adult volunteer and a child to look in the box at the mirror.



What to Say



What to Do

Put up a hand if you like getting gifts.

It's great being given a gift. It's even more super-special if someone made the gift just for you.

Here's a gift that was made for me... *(briefly tell the story of the gift).*

Hold up the gift box.

Lift the handmade gift out of the box.

[Name of person] made this with love and care. It may not be perfect - one from a shop might look better, neater and shinier - but it was made especially for me and no-one else has the same one. That's why it's so special.

Did you know that you have all been given a wonderful gift? It was carefully put together by someone who loves you and knows you better than anyone else. It's not perfect but it's very precious.

Who wants to have a look in the gift box to see what it is?

Hold up the gift box. Invite a child up to look inside the box at the mirror.

What can you see?

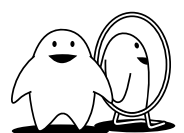
(Encourage them if they don't say anything, e.g. 'I can see something special, one off, unique, amazing!')

You can see you! Your eyes, hair, smile, teeth and body.

Your body is God's wonderful, handmade gift to you. It's a one-off design. You use it every day, as your heart beats and your lungs breathe. You enjoy it every day as you laugh, smile and move.

Take the mirror out of the box and hold it up in front of the child.

continued →



What to Say

What to Do

In Psalm 139, King David sings to God about his body. He said:
'You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.'

(Psalm 139:13 NIV)

Every nerve, muscle, internal organ and feature of your body was chosen for you and handmade by God.

[Slide of Psalm 139:13]

Psalm 139 also tells us how God made us.

'I will praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'

(Psalm 139:14a NIV)

Your body is a wonderfully made gift from God. Your eye is better than any camera. Your hand moves like no other machine. You can run, wave, swim, dance, wiggle your eyebrows and stand on one leg.

Take 1 minute to tell or show the person next to you something wonderful your body can do. Show each other that your bodies are wonderful with a thumbs up.

[Slide of Psalm 139:14a]

Stick the 'Wonderfully' label on the mirror.

Point to the 'thumbs up' emoji on the label.

A gift this good needs to be treated with respect. That's what fearfully means. You've been trusted to look after something brilliant.

We should be starry eyed when we see each other because each person's body is precious. Even if it doesn't work as well or look as good as someone else's.

So I'm careful how I think and speak about my body. I think carefully when other people talk about my body, to check if what they're saying is really true and kind. And I am just as careful about other people's bodies.

Stick the 'Fearfully' label on the mirror.

Point to the 'starry eyed' emoji.

No-one's body is perfect. My body may be slower, wider, shorter or more wobbly than yours. That's OK. God made it like that.

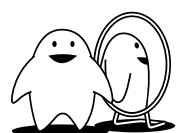
- Sometimes our bodies hurt or don't work well. We can still thank God for what our bodies *can* do.
- When I look in the mirror and don't like what I see, I need to remember it is God's *good* gift to me.
- God gave each of us the body he chose for us, on purpose. So if you're a girl, God can help you enjoy *your* body rather than wishing you had a boy's body. If you're a boy, God can help you enjoy *your* body rather than wishing you had a girl's body. Whether you're a girl or a boy you can play football, write poetry and dance because we're all free to use and enjoy the bodies God gave us.

Pretend to have a sore arm/knee.

Look in the mirror and frown.

Adult volunteer of the opposite sex stands beside you. Do some dance moves or kick a football together.

continued →



What to Say

What to Do

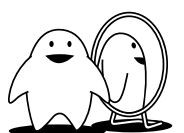
We treat everyone's body with respect as a handmade gift. Every time you see yourself in a mirror, say to yourself, 'My body is a gift from God. I am fearfully and wonderfully made!'

Hold up the mirror.

In this series on identity, we're touching on issues that are personal and things that our culture finds hard. We hope that the Take Home Sheet that you'll be given later will help you to see what your children have been taught today. As parents, you know which issues to talk about with your children.

Let's thank God together for the gift he has given us and ask him to help us listen to what he says about our bodies.

Pray.





UNDER 7's LESSON PLAN



GET GOING

My Brilliant Body

Children stand around the parachute/sheet and hold the edges. Call out a description e.g. 'Brown eyes' as everyone lifts up the parachute. Children with brown eyes run under the parachute to switch places with someone else. Call out descriptions that describe bodies e.g. eye/hair/skin colour, hair type, boy, girl, freckles/moles/birthmarks etc.

If you don't have a parachute/sheet or the space for it then get the children to sit down/stand up if they fit the description called out.



Link: Our bodies are made by God. Each one is different, each one is wonderful!



TEACHING TIME

Your Handmade Body

Hold up the gift box and talk about the best presents they've received. God has given each of us a brilliant gift. Pass the box around for the children to take turns looking at their gift (their reflection in the mirror inside the box).

- What did you see inside the gift box?

Our bodies are a gift from God. Read Psalm 139:13: *You made my whole being. You formed me in my mother's body.*

Hold up the mirror. Every single part of our bodies - inside and outside - was put together by God. Your body, from the tips of your hair to the toes on your feet is a good gift from him. Say a body part (or just point to it). The children have to touch theirs and say, 'God made my...'

God made two kinds of bodies - boys' bodies and girls' bodies. He carefully chose the body he gave you.

- What body has God given you - boy or girl?

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NOTES

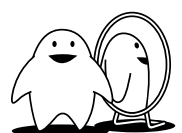
Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

You will need: a parachute/very large sheet.

Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

You will need: A gift box with a mirror inside, pictures of a thumbs up emoji and a starry eyed emoji, Blu Tack, items that help us care for our bodies (e.g. toothbrush, medicine, a plaster, fruit, water, soap, protective equipment etc.).



God's Amazing Gift

Read Psalm 139:14: *I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What you have done is wonderful. I know this very well.*

Stick the thumbs up emoji to the mirror: You are wonderfully made!

- What can you do with your arms, legs, hands, mouth? Or act out activities (clap, jump, a sport, draw, dance etc.) for the children to guess.

All do a 'thumbs up' because we all have a wonderful body that can do wonderful things. Our bodies are wonderful but they aren't perfect. Sometimes our bodies hurt or they can't do certain things very well (remind them of Week 3 - I am hurting).

- Are there things your body can't do that you wish it could?
- What do you most enjoy doing with your body? (Either ask them to turn to a partner to decide or give them four choices to pick from: running, swimming, climbing, lying down). Act out doing their favourite activity with their bodies.
- Your body is still God's wonderful gift for you to use and enjoy.

A Gift to Care For

Stick the starry eyed emoji to the mirror: You are fearfully made. Our bodies are an amazing gift from God for us to care for. We must look after them and talk about them with respect because we know how special they are.

- How do you look after your body? What do you need to do to keep it healthy? (Show or have the children run to collect the items that help us care for our bodies.)
- What good/bad things might people say about their body? (E.g. Clever/fast/ugly/fat.)

Let's look after our bodies. Let's ignore unkind words about our bodies. Let's only say kind words about other people's bodies.


All do 'starry eyes' (open and close hands like flashing stars in front of your eyes) because our bodies are a gift from God for us to look after well.



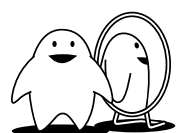
BRAIN BREAK

Mini Circuit Training

Depending on the size of your space, have three or four stations set up around the room. For each station have a mental or physical activity: press ups, star jumps, sit ups, maths puzzles, riddles or brain teaser questions. Choose activities that will cater to different abilities within your group so that every child gets to do an activity they are good at or enjoy. Put the children into small groups and rotate around the stations every few minutes. Keep the time at each station short so it's a sharp burst of activity.

 **Link:** These activities were either easy, difficult, fun or horrible to do because we're all different and capable of doing different things. But God gave each of us exactly the body we need to live for him.

A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.





HEART & HANDS

Craft time - Make a 'Fearfully and wonderfully made' badge

Prepare in advance: cut out the badges.

Give each child a badge to colour in and decorate. Make the **Truth that changes me** personal to each child as you/they write their name on the badge. Say, 'Your body is a special gift from God. You, (name of child) are fearfully and wonderfully made by him!'

Help the children tape the safety pin to the back of the badge before pinning it on for them. You could also let them take turns to look in the mirror and say 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made by God!'

Think time

Big Question: Who gave you your body? *God.*

A follow up question: What can we say about our bodies? *Wow, I am wonderfully made (thumbs up)!*

Prayer

Say together: Thank you for the wonderful gift of our bodies. Please help us to use our hands, our feet, our mouth, our everything to love you and one another. Amen.



Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.

You will need: the craft sheet printed onto card (1 per 4 children), scissors, tape, crayons/coloured pens, stickers, glitter glue and safety pins (1 per child)





OVER 8's LESSON PLAN



GET GOING

Body Comments

Give all the children a few sticky notes. As a warm up exercise, ask half the group to write three describing words on their sticky note (e.g. fast, green, adventurous, bright, blue, calm, curious) and the other half to write three body parts (e.g. leg, knee, heart, toe, nose, ear, lung, elbow). Now pair up. Read an adjective followed by a body part. Did any make sense? Could you imagine anyone describing themselves like that?

Now, ask the children to write on the sticky notes the kind of comments people actually make about body parts, both good and bad. Stick the comments on the mirror.



Link: There are many words we hear from others about bodies and many we say to ourselves. Today we want to take some time out from these voices to listen to what God has to say.



TEACHING TIME

Ask the children about gifts they've received. What was their favourite/least liked gift? How did they respond? Were any hand-made?

Your Handmade Body

Read Psalm 139:13: *You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

- Imagine this verse was describing a painting. What would be in the picture?
- God made your unique body. Do you have something about your body that's different to other people's? (Start by thinking of things they can do, or skills they've developed, because their bodies allow it.)
- God made every detail of your body. Is there something about your body that you would not have chosen, but God did? Is there something about your body that you are unhappy about?

God gave us our bodies. He chose every part. He gave you a boy's body, or a girl's body deliberately. Even if you don't like the body you have, it is the one God made for you and he can help you to enjoy it.

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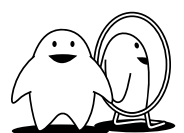
NOTES

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

You will need: Sticky notes, pens and a mirror.

You will need: Bibles (we suggest you use the NIV instead of the ICB for this age group as it uses the words 'fearfully' and 'wonderfully'), pens, drywipe marker, mirror with the sticky notes from Get Going.



God's Amazing Gift



Read Psalm 139:14: *I praise you because I am **fearfully** and **wonderfully** made.*

What do you think it means if something is **fearfully** and **wonderfully** made? Put it into your own words about your body. 'My body is...'

Different voices tell us what *they think* makes a good body, but God tells us what is true. Look at the sticky notes from **Get Going**, do any of the comments fit with how God describes us as 'fearfully and wonderfully made'? Write some new ones that reflect God's view of our bodies.

We need to listen to him more than other people. When we feel like we don't look good enough, we need to hear God say that we're fearfully and wonderfully made. Everyone's body has value and is to be respected. We're careful about pictures of bodies that we share and look at.

- Practice talking about how God has made your (or someone else's) body amazing. Think of some common unkind descriptions - what could you say instead?
- How do you use your body to do something you enjoy?

God's Own Ordinary Body

Read Isaiah 53:2: *He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

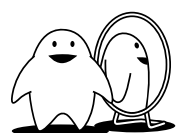
God's prophet Isaiah was talking about Jesus' body.

- What did he say about it?
- Have you ever wondered what Jesus' body was like? Is this surprising?
- If this is what the perfect human's body was like, what do we learn about our bodies?

There are many ways this teaching affects our words, thoughts and conversations. Depending on the age of your children, you could talk about one of the following body issues. You could start by asking them which one(s) they have heard or talked to others about.

- **Negative body image: When people feel really unhappy about their own body.** What parts of their body do people often wish they could change? What could you say to God if you don't like your body or wish you could change it?
- **Gender stereotypes: When people assume someone will have to do certain activities or look a certain way because they are a boy or girl.** God gives a lot of freedom for us to work out how to live as the male or female he made us to be. Can you think of some examples of when we, or others, expect boys to be a certain way (that not all boys are)? And what about girls? Are there some ways that you feel limited or uncomfortable because you are a boy or a girl?
- **Gender identity issues: When people do not feel comfortable with their body and think it is the wrong biological sex.** Do you know anyone who would say that about themselves? What have we learnt today that God says about the body he has given them?

continued →






BRAIN BREAK

Gravity Challenge

Children start on their hands and knees on the mats. Next, they put their elbows on the floor and their chin in their hands. The challenge is to quickly move their hands from under their chins to behind their backs. Last but not least, they must try not to fall on their face!

 **Link:** This challenge shows the difference between men and women's bodies - usually men aren't able to do it. God gave boys different bodies to girls. Even if you can do it now, you may find it more challenging as you get older (leaders demonstrate!).



HEART & HANDS

Did you spot it?

- What can we say about God and our bodies?
- What does God think of your body?
- What was Jesus' body like?

Work it out

- On a scale of 1 to 10 how do you rate your body? *Don't have to answer aloud. You could have the children write answers on papers, put them in a hat and then analyse.*
- From what we have learnt today, what can we say if we gave our bodies less than 5?
- Do you know someone who hates their body or really dislikes a part of it? What could you say to encourage them?

Live it out

Look at case study picture A:

- What might the boy be tempted to think about his body?
- What would you love to say to him from what we have learnt today?
- How do these truths about God help him in that moment?

Or look at case study picture B:

- How do you think the girl in the tracksuit feels? Do you think she is uncomfortable because she feels different to the girls? Do you think she wishes the boys would let her play football with them?
- What would you love to say to her from what we have learnt today?
- Have you ever felt like you should be doing/wearing/enjoying certain things because you are a boy or a girl? When?
- How would we care for her if she said she wanted to be a boy?

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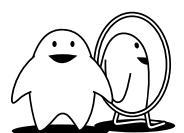


A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.

You will need: exercise/foam mats.

A chance to reflect and chat about how the truth, through the Spirit's work, changes our thoughts (head), feelings (heart) and actions (hands).

*Use the **Chat Time** sheet – you could enlarge it and work on it together. Hand out sticky notes so children can still respond personally.*



Extra Stretch

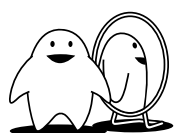
- How does God decide how valuable someone is? How do people often decide that? What does that mean for those with weaker bodies, bigger struggles?
- What effect does social media have on this? Are there photos/videos we should *not* share?
- Forgetting that our bodies are a wonderful gift from God can lead to us thinking they are just objects to change, or things to stare at to make us feel good. Naked images and other types of pornography are easy for you to see or be shown on smartphones. What are our choices when we see pornographic images or films?
- Thinking about those who feel uncomfortable with their body, wishing they could be the other gender, what have we learnt from the Bible about their bodies? How could that help them? What other questions or difficulties do you think remain?

Prayer

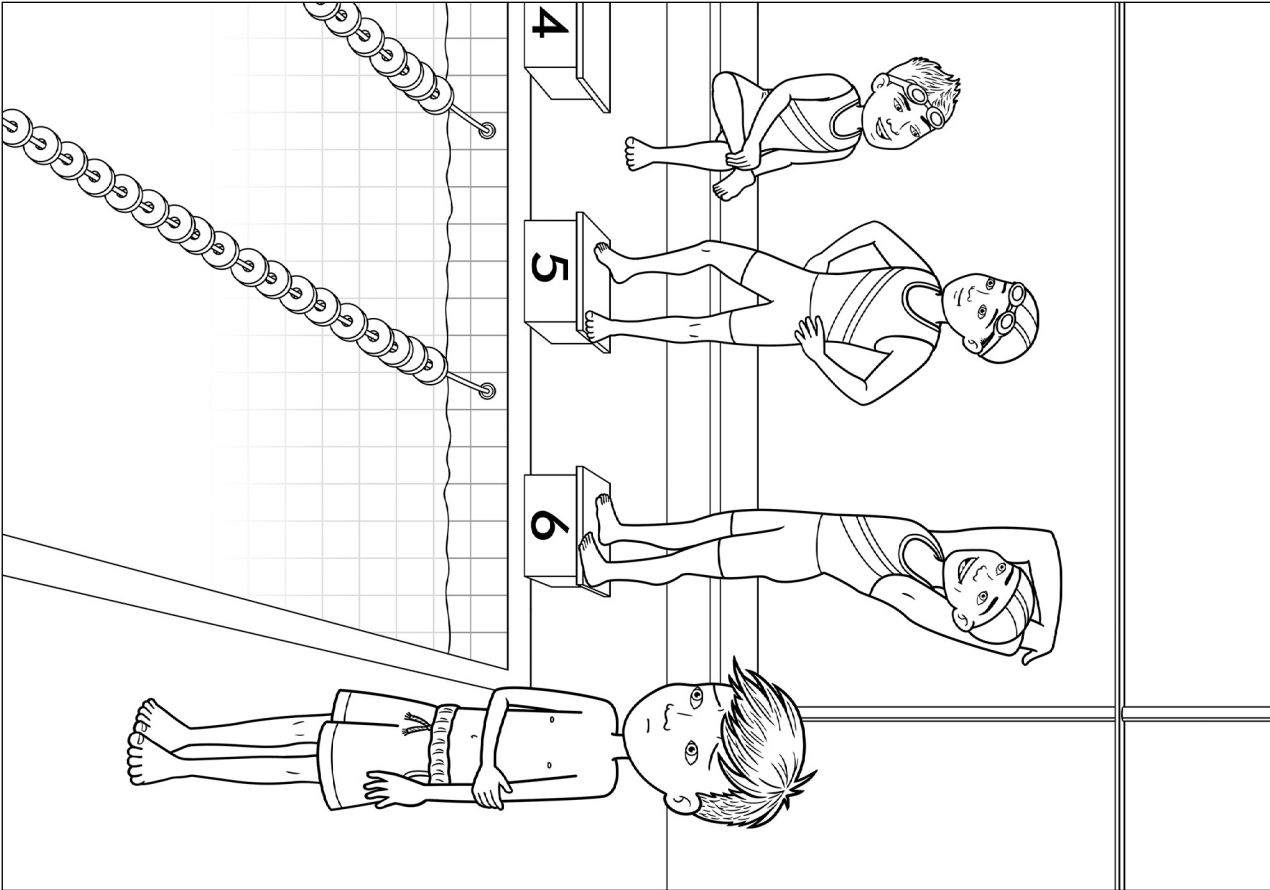
Help your group to pray according to what they've heard today. Give them sticky notes to write out their prayers. Ask questions to help them think of what to thank God for or what to ask him to help them with in response to today's truth.

E.g. What would you like to say to God about your body? Do you need his help to think or feel differently about your body in any way?

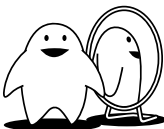
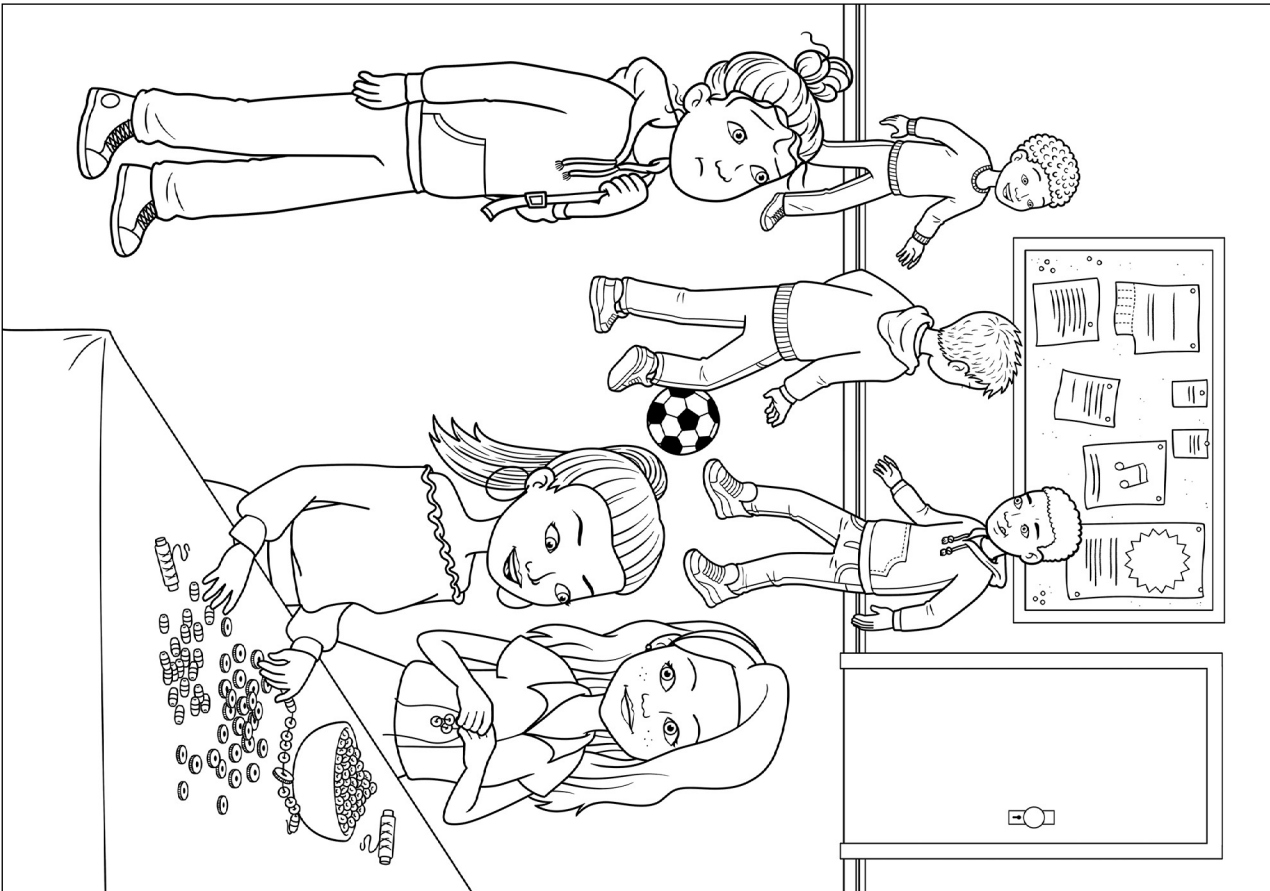
These questions are designed to stretch the resource up to teenage years. Depending on the level of discussion in your group, you may want to consider using them.



A



B





is FEARFULLY &
WONDERFULLY
made!



is FEARFULLY &
WONDERFULLY
made!



is FEARFULLY &
WONDERFULLY
made!



is FEARFULLY &
WONDERFULLY
made!





WHO AM I?

I am given a body

PSALM 139:13-16a; ISAIAH 53:2

Look at these verses together and find the answers



DID YOU SPOT IT?

What can we say about God and our bodies?



What does God think of your body?



What was Jesus' body like?



WORK IT OUT

Give everyone a chance to answer...

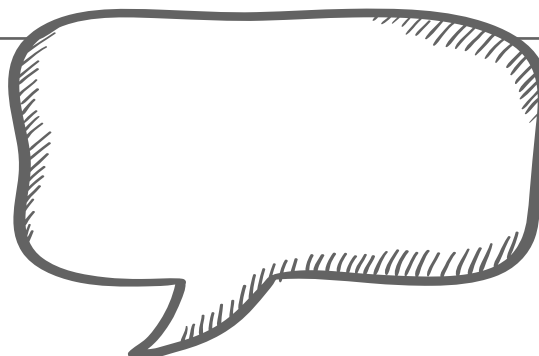
On a scale of 1 to 10 how do you rate your body?



From what we have learnt today, what can we say if we gave our bodies less than 5?

Do you know someone who hates their body or really dislikes a part of it?

What could you say to encourage them?





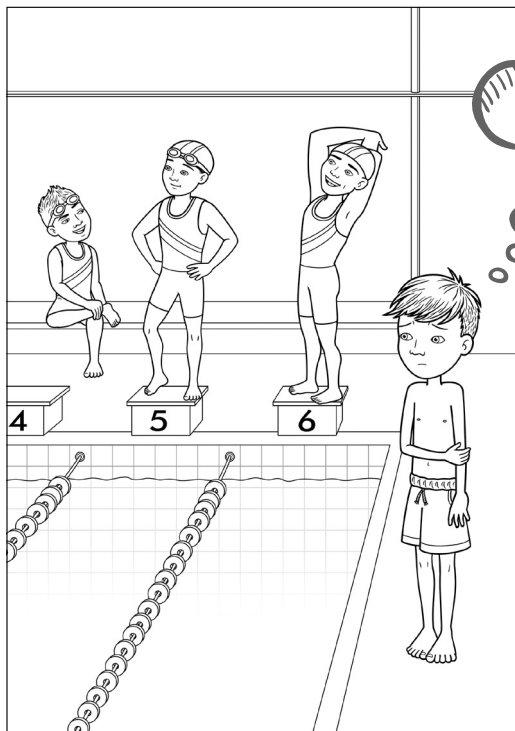
HEART & HANDS CHAT TIME

faith4kids



LIVE IT OUT

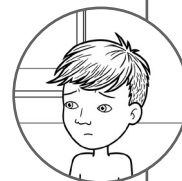
Give everyone a chance to speak...



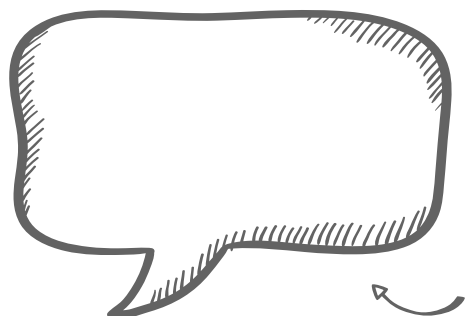
What might the boy be tempted to think about his body?

What would you love to say to him from what we've learnt today?

How do these truths about God help him in that moment?



How do you think the girl in the tracksuit feels?



What would you love to say to her from what we've learnt today?

Have you ever felt like you should be doing, wearing or enjoying certain things because you are a boy or a girl?

When?



How would we care for her if she said she wanted to be a boy?





I am made
by God



I am made to
love others



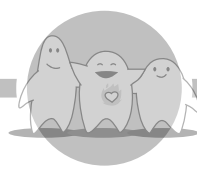
I am
hurting



I am given
a body



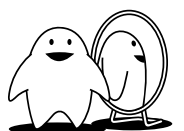
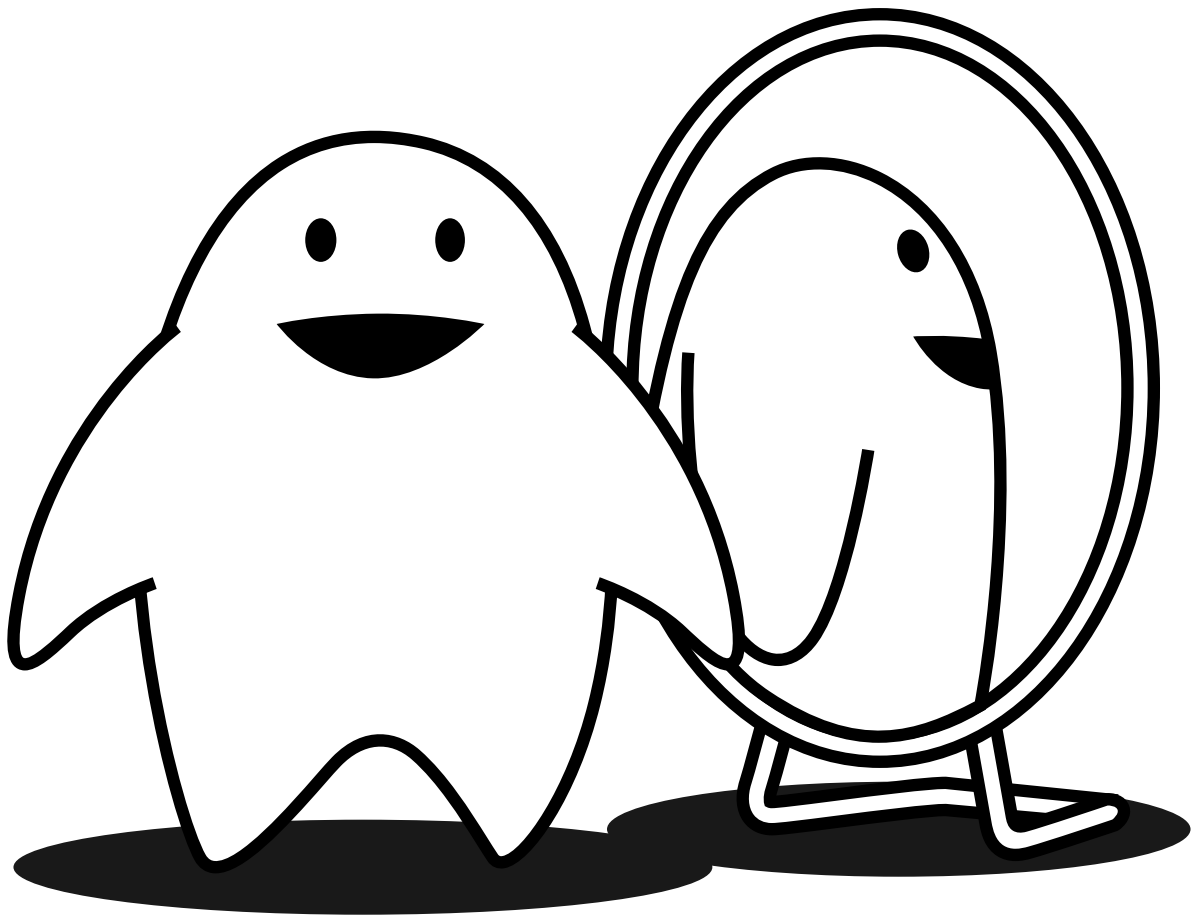
I am loved
and forgiven



We are
not alone



We will be
like Jesus





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