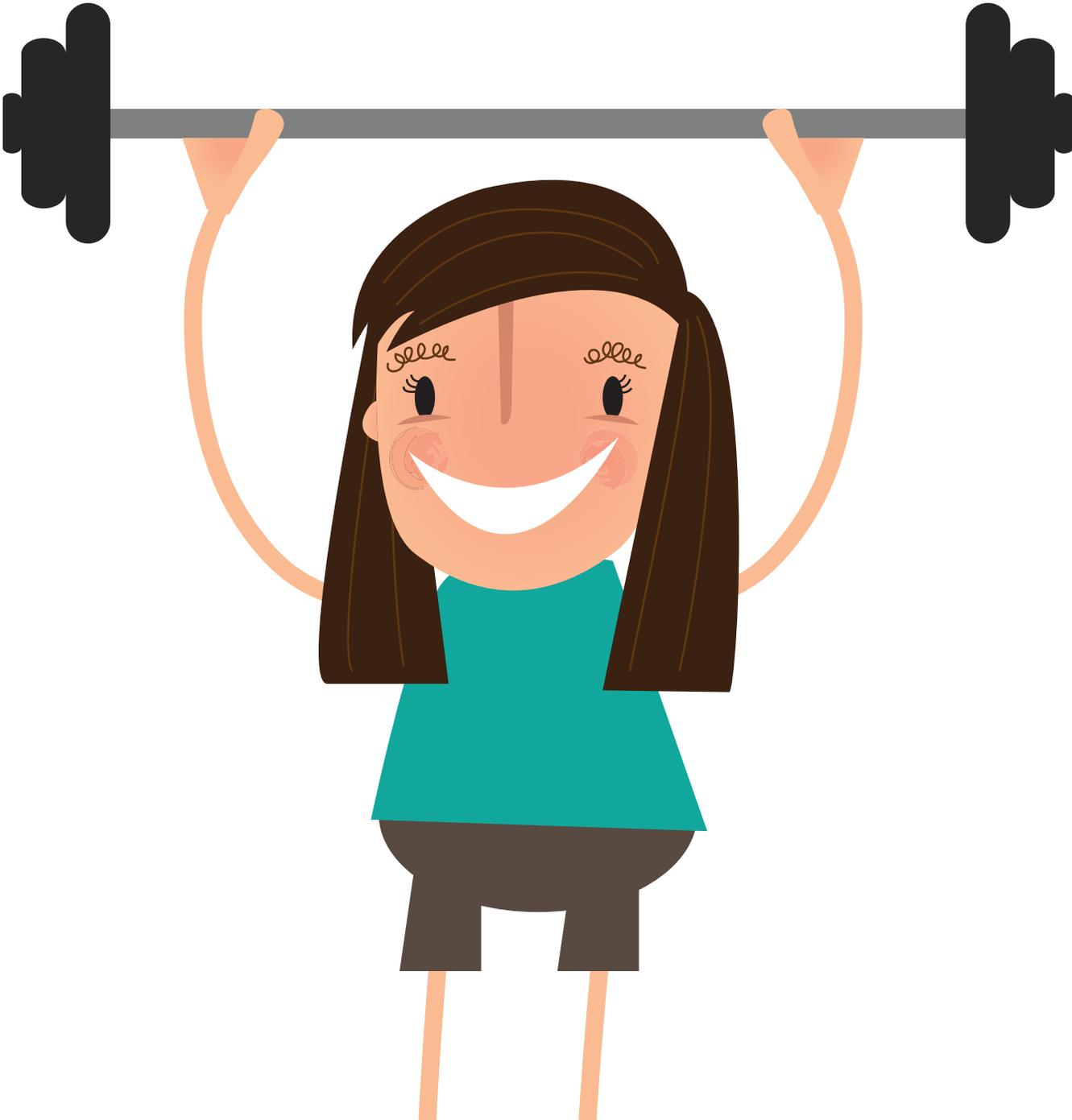


KIDS *of*
INTEGRITY

Confidence



What did Jesus say about our value in God's eyes? How do you find the perfect balance between pride and self-doubt? How is the water cycle like God's love? Try these activities to find out!

Choose from some fun ideas that help kids:

- understand that they have value because they were created by God and are loved by Him
- trust God to help them overcome perceived limitations
- humbly honour God with their talents, esteeming Him rather than themselves.

You'll find this lesson helpful for addressing insecurity, worry, self-rejection, depression, jealousy, comparing with or envying others, or being judgmental of self and others.

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Parents' prayer

As you spend time in private prayer preparing for this lesson on confidence, use the following prayer to help you embrace the right attitude toward your own strengths and limitations.

If you prefer to personalize your prayer, read through the additional verses provided under "Scripture-guided prayer" for direction and inspiration.

Sample prayer

Lord Almighty, when I think of the heavens and everything You have made, how You put the moon and stars in the sky, I wonder *Who am I that You even think of me?* (Psalm 8:3-5). I am humbled knowing that You placed the price tag of Your Son's death on my soul and gave me the privilege of being made in Your image. You also "crowned me with glory" by giving me, along with all mankind, the honour of ruling over all of the other creatures You created (Psalm 8:6, Genesis 1:26-27). Thank you for the wonders of Your great love and for seeing me as "the apple of Your eye" (Psalm 17:7-8).

How sad that I do not always see myself as valuable. Sometimes I pull a shadow over the person You created me to be because I don't see myself as You see me. In focusing on all my shortcomings and comparing myself to others, I end up wanting what others have instead of being thankful for the strengths You have given me. This is wrong. When I have doubts, please send Your Holy Spirit to remind me of Your unconditional love and Your long-term plan for my life.

On the flip side, there are times when I am prideful, trusting too much in my accomplishments and thinking more of myself than I should. Please forgive me for being preoccupied with myself in a positive or negative way; I'd rather be focused on You. Would You remind me daily of the importance of allowing Your Spirit to refine and define me? My desire is to see myself as You do: as *loved*, despite being flawed, and *righteous*, because of Jesus' sacrifice and Your forgiveness.

Lord, as my children grow up in our performance-based society, where people are constantly trying to prove themselves to others, I ask that the only One _____ and _____ will be concerned about pleasing will be You. Should Satan lie to _____ and _____, tempting them to believe that they are not worthy of Your love, please assure them of how precious they are to You and give them security knowing that they are loved by You, regardless. Instead of evaluating themselves based on cultural standards of athleticism, intellect, money, looks, power and prestige, I ask You to give _____ and _____ a thorough comprehension of the love You have for them and all the wonderful plans You have for their lives (1 Corinthians 2:9). Please remind them often that You do not judge by externals, but by the attitude of a person's heart (1 Samuel 16:7). I pray that _____ and _____ will find their confidence in You, not in what they have or do.

Lord, I thank you for our family: _____ (list each family member). Thank you for their individual personalities, looks and talents. Please help us to delight in Your creativity as we appreciate how You have made each one of us unique. Let us love each other based on Your commandment that we love one another, not because of anything any one of us does (John 15:12). Let us live with confidence, knowing that You will carry on the good work You have started in each of our hearts until it is finished (Philippians 1:6). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by exalting God for who He is and by thanking Him for making you, and for loving and valuing you. Psalm 139:13-17 | Jeremiah 31:3 | Romans 8:31-39 | Ephesians 1:3-8 | 1 John 4:9-10

Heart search

Acknowledge the times or situations in which you view yourself negatively. Confess the areas in which you are tempted to be prideful or self-sufficient.

Proverbs 27:2 | Jeremiah 9:23-24 | Jeremiah 10:23-24 | Hebrews 4:14-16 | 2 Peter 1:3-9

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen family members display an understanding of their value based on being created and loved by Him.

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your family members see yourselves as valuable and as having potential because God is the One who made you, loves you and has plans to accomplish through you.

Psalm 8:5 | 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 | Ephesians 2:10 | Philippians 1:6 | 1 John 5:18

Kids talk with God

These sample prayers all begin with "Dear God," but you may use any other names of God your children are comfortable with, (i.e. Father God, Lord Jesus, Heavenly Father, Abba Father, etc.)

If your children are ready to pray original prayers, you may wish to use the Bible verses provided under "Scripture-guided prayer for children."

Sample prayers

Dear God, thank you for making me special. Amen.

Dear God, thank you for making me "me." Amen.

Dear God, thank you for giving me the ability to _____. (Have your child name something he / she is good at.) Please help me use this talent to honour You. Amen.

Dear God, please help me to remember that I am special because You made me in Your image (Genesis 1:26-27). Amen.

Dear God, please help me to remember that I am valuable because You created me. Amen.

Dear God, when I feel bad about myself, please remind me that I am Your creation. Amen.

Dear God, thank you for making me exactly according to Your plan for me. Amen.

Dear God, thank you for making me _____.
_____. (Have your child list ways in which he / she is unique.) Amen.

Dear God, please help me to always remember to praise You for being who You are – the Lord of all creation, including me! Amen.

Dear God, when I am tempted to be proud of myself, help me to remember You are my Creator and You are the only One who deserves the honour. Amen.

Dear God, when I feel unloved, please remind me that I am “the apple of Your eye.” When I am scared, please remind me that You hide me in “the shadow of Your wings” (Psalm 17:8). Amen.

For boys: Dear God, I want to be a mighty warrior for You, just as Gideon was (Judges 6:12). Amen.

For girls: Dear God, I want to be as confident as a queen or a princess and be willing to stand up for righteousness, just as Esther was (Esther 4:14). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

Read through one of the selected Scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by exalting God for who He is and by thanking Him for making you, and for loving and valuing for you.

Psalm 139:13-16 | Jeremiah 31:3 | Luke 18:16

Heart search

Acknowledge times when you view yourself negatively, or areas in which you are tempted to be proud.

Psalm 139:13-16 | Jeremiah 31:3 | Luke 18:16

Gratitude

Thank God for loving you and making you “you.”

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your family members to see yourselves as valuable because you are all created and loved by God.

Psalm 8:5 | Romans 8:31 | Ephesians 2:10

Speak a blessing

Children need to feel assured of a parent’s unconditional love, as opposed to conditional love which is based on performance or potential. As you affirm your child, be sure to choose statements that refer to factors they have control over, instead of things they have little or no control over.

To clarify, here are a couple of examples of praise that expresses unconditional love:

- Instead of exclaiming “Robbie! You are such a fast runner!” say instead, “I love how you give 100 per cent effort when you run.”
- When your daughter looks lovely in an outfit, rather than telling her how cute she is, comment on godly character traits. For example, you could say, “Your joyful smile reminds me that you have ‘Jesus joy’ in your heart.”

Here are some simple ways to compliment your child:

- God made you special.
- I love you just the way God made you.
- God loves you and so do I.
- There’s nothing you can do to make God love you more, and there’s nothing you can do to make God love you less.
- God looks at your heart, not at your outside.
- I’m sure God is happy with the _____ (peace, joy, self-control, patience, compassion etc.) He sees in you.

- Thank you for being _____ (kind, generous, forgiving, gentle, patient etc.). I know God is happy when He sees His character in you!
- You are wonderful because you are one of God's works (Psalm 139:14).

A song or prayer of blessing is a powerful way to speak to your children of your love and assure them of God's favour and protection at the end of each day. The "Taps-style" camp song *Good Night* is a lovely song to sing to children at bedtime. Here are the lyrics:

Good Night

*Good night, our God is watching o'er you
Good night, His mercies go before you
Good night, and we'll be praying for you
So good night, may God bless you.*

This second verse is not part of the original *Good Night* song. *Kid's of Integrity* author Laurel Kirchner added it to sing to her own children:

*Good night, your mom and dad do love you
Good night, we think the world of you
Good night, and we'll be praying for you
So good night, we do love you!*

Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God's Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse that your children can learn in a pre-determined period of time and aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

1 Samuel 16:7 "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

Psalm 9:10 "Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You."

Psalm 25:3a "No one whose hope is in You will ever be put to shame . . ."

Psalm 25:5 "Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long."

Psalm 25:21 "May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in You."

Psalm 31:24 "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord."

Psalm 33:22 "May Your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in You."

Psalm 42:5 "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God."

Psalm 62:8 "Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge."

Psalm 71:5 "For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth."

Psalm 86:2 "Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in You."

Psalm 91:2 "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"

Psalm 103:11 "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him . . ."

Psalm 118:6a "The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid."

Psalm 118:7a "The Lord is with me; He is my helper."

Psalm 118:8 "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."

Psalms 139:14 “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Psalms 147:10-11 “His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.”

Proverbs 27:2 “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”

Proverbs 29:25 “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”

Isaiah 12:2 “Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.”

Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.”

Jeremiah 17:7 “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.”

Jeremiah 29:11 “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ ”

Matthew 6:26 “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Luke 12:24 “Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”

Romans 8:1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . .”

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:37 “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”

Hebrews 13:6 “So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’ ”

1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”

Kick-off craft

Early in your lesson on confidence, help your children make these two measuring charts, which are similar to traditional growth charts.

The first chart represents the way the world evaluates us. It’s very tall, illustrating that it’s impossible for anyone to reach the world’s standard of perfection.

The second chart shows how God “measures” us. It’s very short, because everyone who makes the choice to accept Jesus “measures up.”

Make two measure-up charts

Directions

You’ll need the following supplies:

- 2-3 sheets of poster board

- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- a ruler
- felt-tip markers.

To make the world's measuring chart:

- 1** Cut one of the poster boards into four equal portions (widthwise).
- 2** Tape the sheets end to end to make one very tall growth chart.
- 3** Use a marker to add horizontal measurement lines on your chart.
- 4** Help your children cut out magazine pictures that illustrate how the world measures us – or have your children draw their own pictures. Beside the horizontal lines you have drawn, list examples of how people measure each other. For example:
 - how much money we have (*show dollar signs or coins and bills*)
 - where we live and the kind of house we live in (*show a beautiful home*)
 - attractiveness and how we look (*show a beautiful smiling face with bright white teeth or an attractive model with a muscular body*)
 - how good we are at sports (*show someone playing sports*)
 - how smart we are (*show a brain*)
 - how many friends we have and how much fun we seem to have (*show a group of friends having fun together*)
 - the kind of car we drive (*show an expensive sports car*)

- how many toys we have (*show many fancy toys*)
- the kind of clothes we wear (*show brand-name clothing*).

To make the God's measuring chart:

- 1** Cut one of the poster boards short enough so that all family members are tall enough to be "off the chart." Include traditional horizontal "height lines" and place a big heart at the top.
- 2** Make 20 -30 smaller hearts (which you will eventually place alongside the horizontal measurement lines on God's measuring chart). Place them in a basket or bowl near the chart.
- 3** Print out these Bible verses and place them in the basket near the chart too: **Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16, Romans 8:38-39, 1 John 3:1a, 1 John 4:8b, 1 John 4:9, 1 John 4:10.** (All the verses assure your children of God's unconditional love.)
- 4** Each day, allow your children to each take one heart and one verse from the bowl. Read the verse and stick the heart on the chart. By the end of your study on confidence, your chart will be full of hearts and your children will have a visual reminder of God's immense love for them.
- 5** While you are working on God's measuring chart, ask the following discussion questions.

Questions for discussion

1. Do you decide how many toys you have?
2. Can you control the way you look?
3. Can you ever measure up to the world's standards?
4. Let's say you do a pretty good job of measuring up based on the world's standards: you are attractive, smart and athletic. Does this make you more valuable than the next kid?

5. If you base your value on what other people think of you, will you ever measure up in everyone's eyes?
6. Is it possible to earn God's love?
7. Why does God love you?
8. Can we be righteous just by trying?
9. Is it your choice to ask God to forgive your sins?
10. Whose choice is it to obey the directions God gives us in the Bible?

Key concepts

People often evaluate us based on how we look, how much money we have, the kind of house we live in, our athletic ability, how smart we are, how many friends we have, how much fun we seem to have, the kind of car we drive, how many toys we have, and the kind of clothes we wear. But many of these things are beyond our control. It can be very discouraging to try and “measure up” to all of the world's standards.

In contrast, God “measures us” based only on things we *can* control. We cannot change our looks, or our inborn talents or abilities, but we do have complete control over the attitudes of our hearts. The Bible tells us that people look at the outside, but God looks at what is in our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7).

God loves everyone and offers each person an opportunity to be part of His family. God looks for people who love and respect Him and who have humble and sorry hearts. God lets us choose whether or not we will obey His commandments in the Bible and whether or not we will ask Him to forgive our sins and invite Him to be the leader of our lives.

We are all born sinful, but through Jesus becoming the sacrifice for our sins, we can have our sins forgiven and be seen by God as “righteous” (2 Corinthians 5:17,21). We don't have to be “good enough” to be forgiven by God. God just wants us to humbly admit that we do bad things (that we are sinful) and that we need His forgiveness and His Spirit living in us to make us like Him – loving and righteous.

Relevant Scripture

1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ ”

Isaiah 66:2 “ ‘Has not My hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word.’ ”

Luke 10:27 “He answered: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. . . .”

2 Corinthians 5:17,21 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! . . . God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Bible stories

This section provides a collection of stories with the theme of confidence, along with questions you can use to guide family discussions. Choose one or more stories that are appropriate for your children.

If the Bible passage is too complex for your children, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

Created in God's image

Read Ezekiel 1:1,4-9,22-28.

Questions for discussion

1. What did Ezekiel do when he had a vision of God? (A vision is a dream that you have when you are still awake.)
2. How did Ezekiel describe what God looked like?

3. If you had a vision of God, what do you think you would do?

Read **Genesis 1:26-28**.

4. The Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God. What do you think this means?
5. What was the important job that God gave to man?
6. Do you think God would give this job to just anybody or anything?

Read **James 3:9-10**.

7. Who has been made in God's likeness?
8. Is it okay to say bad things about others or ourselves?

Key concepts

When Ezekiel had a vision of God, he fell face down on the ground. He couldn't even stand up and look at the vision. Ezekiel described God as having a figure like a man, and from His waist up He looked like "glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down He looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded Him" (Ezekiel 1:27). Ezekiel also said the radiance around God was like a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day. It would have been an incredibly magnificent sight! You can understand why Ezekiel bowed down before his vision of God.

The Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God. To be made in God's image, or to be created to be similar to Him, is a big honour. It means we have been made to live forever and made with the ability to know, to love, and to serve God. We have also been given the ability to make choices.

God loves people and He wants us to treat each other with care and respect. In the Bible, it tells us that it is wrong to use our tongues to praise God and then say bad things about people, who have been made in God's image. When we say negative things about other people or negative things about ourselves, we are insulting God's amazing creations.

God is incredible. Being made in His image means we are extremely valuable. When we see ourselves and others as valued creations of God, it helps us to remember to treat each person (including ourselves and His other creations) with love, kindness and consideration.

Relevant Scripture

Titus 3:1-2 "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."

Bought with a price

Note: This story fits well with the hands-on option "you're a treasure."

Read **Matthew 18:12-14**.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever lost something that was important to you?
2. How hard did you search to find it?
3. What was lost in this story?
4. How many sheep did the farmer leave behind in the sheep pen while he looked for the lost one?

Read **Matthew 13:45-46**.

5. In these stories, who do you think the pearl is?
6. Why do you think Jesus told these stories?
7. Can you think of anything that is worth a lot of money?
8. What is the highest price you can think of – \$100, \$1000 or a million dollars?
9. How much did the merchant who bought the fine pearl pay for it?

Read **John 3:16-17** and **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**.

10. What price did Jesus "pay" for us?

11. Are we worth that much?

12. What does God think?

Key concepts

Jesus told these parables because He wants us to realize that we are valuable to Him, like the pearl and the lost sheep were valued by their owners. Jesus is like the merchant or the shepherd. He was willing to pay a very high price for us. The price Jesus paid was His own life (**Corinthians 6:20, Matthew 20:28, Revelation 5:9-10**). Jesus died to “purchase” us (or pay the penalty for our sins) so our sins could be forgiven and we could have the honour of living as children of God.

Note: For an interactive explanation of salvation, see “the parable of the lost sheep” in the Bible stories section of the forgiveness lesson, or the “lost and found” hands-on option in this lesson.

Relevant Scripture

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Angels watching over us

Note: As you read these Psalms, have your children listen standing up so they can perform their own actions to go along with what you are reading.

Read Psalm 91:11-12 and Psalm 121.

Questions for discussion

1. What does a guard do?
2. Why does something need to be protected?
3. Who does God say will guard us or watch over us?

4. Why would God want to take care of us?

Key concepts

People keep many items locked up in order to keep them safe. If something is very valuable, the owner of an item may even have a guard or guard dog put in place to watch over the safety of the item day and night. God considers us so important that He sends His angels to watch over us and to keep us from harm. In the Bible we read that God never sleeps and that He watches over us day and night. We can be confident, knowing that God values us so much that He provides protection for us all the time.

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 12:21 “No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.”

Luke 4:10-11 “For it is written: ‘He will command His angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

We are more precious than anything

Read Luke 12:22-26 and Luke 12:32-34.

Questions for discussion

1. What are some things people are tempted to worry about?
2. Why don't we need to be anxious about these things?
3. What does Jesus say about these things?
4. If people are worried that they will not have enough money to take care of themselves, do you think they will give any of their money away to help others?
5. What does Jesus say about worrying?

Key concepts

Having enough money is a common worry for people, because money is used to buy food, shelter, electricity, transportation and clothing. Jesus said that people can't even add an extra hour to their lives by worrying. Jesus assures us that because we are worth more than the birds, He will care for us too.

He also encouraged the disciples to be generous by sharing with those who had less.

Jesus prays for us

Note: As you read the verses below from John 17, have your children listen for the things Jesus asked God for.

Read John 17:9-11,22-24.

You may choose to paraphrase and shorten this story or use the summary in the “key concepts” below.

Questions for discussion

1. Why did Jesus pray for His disciples?
2. Who did Jesus pray for next?
3. When Jesus prayed for us, what did He ask God to do?
4. What do you think it means to live in unity?
5. Imagine a family that lives together without fighting. Can people do this just by trying really hard, or do you think they would need God’s love in their hearts in order to be able to live in harmony? (For more practical information on living together in unity, see the *Harmony* lesson.)

Key concepts

Jesus prayed for us because He loves us! These are the things Jesus prayed for us:

- Jesus asked God to protect us.
- Jesus asked God to teach us to live in unity with Him.
- Jesus asked God to take us to be with Him in heaven.
- Jesus asked that the world would know that God loves His children as much as He loves Jesus.

Tell your children you are going to pray for them too, because you love them. Pray a “prayer of protection” for your children, as Jesus prayed in John 17:22-24. Here’s a sample prayer you can use:

Father God, thank you for giving me these precious children, _____, _____, and _____ to care for. It comforts me to know that You love them and consider them as valuable as I do. I cannot be with them and watch over them all the time, but I know You do!

In the powerful name of Your Son, Jesus, please protect _____, _____, and _____. Please send Your Holy Spirit to fill our family with Your love so that we can live in complete unity so others will know that we love You and that You love everyone as You love Your Son Jesus. We look forward to being in heaven with You someday. Amen.

Asa has an A+ attitude

Note: For children who may be frightened by references to death, omit reading 2 Chronicles 15:13 and skip question 10.

Read 2 Chronicles 14:1-2,8-15 and 2 Chronicles 15:1-19.

Questions for discussion

1. What does the Bible tell us about Asa?
2. What kind of an army did Asa have?
3. How big was Zerah the Cushite’s army?
4. What did Asa do before going to battle against the other army?
5. What or who did Asa trust in?
6. Who came to help Asa win the battle?
7. Who did Asa listen to?
8. What did Azariah, son of Obed, tell Asa?
9. What did Asa do after he listened to Azariah, son of Obed?
10. What happened to those who refused to seek God?
11. How did the people of Judah seek God?
12. What did Asa do to his grandmother? Why?

Key concepts

The Bible tells us that Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God and that his heart was fully committed to the Lord his God all his life (2 Chronicles 14:2, 15:17). Asa had a pretty big army, but Zerah the Cushite who was coming to fight against Asa had a much bigger army. Asa's army had bows, swords and shields, but Zerah's army also had chariots. Before going into battle, Asa prayed asking for God's help and saying, "Lord, there is no one like You to help the powerless against the mighty." Asa relied on God, not on His own army or strength.

After God helped Asa win this battle, the prophet Azariah came and spoke with Asa. He said, "The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you." Azariah also encouraged Asa by saying, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded" (2 Chronicles 15:1,7).

Asa listened to Azariah and removed the idols from the land and led the people in seeking God. Those who were not willing to follow God were put to death. The Bible tells us that the people of Judah sought God eagerly. Asa even removed his grandmother from her position as queen mother because she made an Asherah pole (another idol). Asa also broke up and burned the Asherah pole. God rewarded Asa's faithfulness by giving the country peace from war. God is pleased when people recognize His sovereign strength, seek Him and put their trust in Him. This is called having "confidence" in God, rather than in ourselves.

Relevant Scripture

2 Chronicles 15:1-2 "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded. He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.'"

Moses feels mousey

Read Exodus 4:1-22.

Questions for discussion

1. What did God ask Moses to do?
2. What did Moses say?
3. Then what did God say?
4. And how did Moses reply?
5. How does the Bible describe God's disappointment with Moses?
6. How did God solve the problem?
7. Why do you think Moses didn't want to speak out loud?
8. Was Moses putting his confidence in God?
9. Is there a job that you would be afraid to do? If so, what is it?
10. Who should you ask for help if this happens?

Key concepts

God picked Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Even though Moses had just watched God demonstrate His great power by turning Moses' staff into a snake and by making Moses' skin full of leprosy and then curing it, Moses still had trouble believing that God would help him lead Israel.

Moses tried to get out of it by saying, "I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10). God challenged Moses to trust Him by saying, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11).

But Moses still asked God to send someone else. As you can imagine, God wasn't very happy with Moses' request. In fact, the Bible says God's anger burned against Moses (Exodus 4:14). God solved the problem by having Aaron, Moses' brother, speak to the people for Moses.

We can make guesses as to why Moses did not want to speak out loud and lead Israel. Oddly enough, we read in Acts 7:20-22 why Moses was an ideal person to lead Israel out of Egypt: he was familiar with the Egyptian traditions and people because he had been raised by Pharaoh's daughter. The Bible also tells us that Moses was "powerful in speech and action" (Acts 7:22). Sometimes God prepares people in advance to do special jobs for Him. If God asks you to do a job and you are frightened or worried about doing it, instead of making excuses, remember to pray and trust that God can help you do it. Let's pray a prayer like that now:

Dear God, if you ever give me a job that I am scared to do, please remind me that I can depend on You for confidence. I don't want to disappoint You by making excuses to get out of any jobs You want me to do. Amen.

Relevant Scripture

2 Corinthians 3:5 "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God."

I call shotgun!

Read Luke 14:1-11.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever seen kids argue about who gets to sit in the front seat of a vehicle?
2. Which are the better seats at a ball game / hockey game / concert / play?
3. Which seat did everyone want in this story?
4. Where did Jesus say people should sit?

Key concepts

Ticket prices for seats that are close to the action at sporting events or near the front for concerts or plays are more expensive. You pay more for the honour of sitting in those seats.

When kids are getting into a vehicle, sometimes one will yell, "I call shotgun!" This means they are saying, "I get to sit in the front." While He was at a dinner party, Jesus noticed guests were "calling shotgun" by choosing the best places for themselves. He told

them that it was better to sit in a poor place and then be asked to move to a better seat, than to sit in a seat of honour and be asked to move to a seat of lesser honour.

The Bible tells us that if we think of ourselves as very important, God will choose to humble us. The opposite is also true: if we think of ourselves humbly, God will honour us (Luke 14:11).

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 23:12 "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Romans 12:3 "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

Philippians 2:3 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."

1 Peter 5:5b "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"

Ahab's foolish confidence

This story contains references to blood and death. You may want to read it ahead of time and paraphrase it for your children.

Before reading 1 Kings 22:29-37, share this summary of the preceding events:

Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were considering joining forces and going to war against a shared enemy. Jehoshaphat agreed to go if they first asked for God's direction. Ahab brought together many prophets, and asked them if he should go to war. (A prophet is someone who speaks the word of God, as directed by the Holy Spirit [2 Peter 1:20-21].)

None of the prophets whom Ahab asked were honest prophets. These dishonest prophets spoke their own words instead of God's words and told the kings to go war and that the Lord would help them win the battle.

Jehoshaphat recognized these men were not honest prophets and asked if there was a true prophet of the Lord they could ask about going to war. Micaiah really was one of God's prophets and he told Jehoshaphat and Ahab that Israel would be like a flock of scattered sheep without a shepherd if they went to war. Both kings decided to go to war anyway (1 Kings 22:1-28).

Read 1 Kings 22:29-37.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever ignored the advice of your parents and gone ahead and did something anyway? If so, what happened?
2. If you were Jehoshaphat, would you have agreed to go to war with Ahab even though the prophet of God advised you not to go?
3. What kind of plans did Ahab and Jehoshaphat make to try and fool the army of Aram?
4. If you were Jehoshaphat, would you have agreed to go into battle pretending to be Ahab?
5. What went wrong with their plans?
6. Did Ahab put his confidence in himself or in God?
7. What happened to Ahab in the end?
8. What lesson you can learn from hearing about the two kings' mistakes?

Key concepts

Sometimes children think they know better than their parents and they ignore their parents' advice and do something their parents have advised them not to do. The story of Ahab and Jehoshaphat ignoring God's advice is similar.

When Ahab and Jehoshaphat went to war (even though the prophet Micaiah had advised them not to), it was as though they were telling God, "We don't need You. We will go into this war and win it on our own." Ahab chose to go into battle disguised as a regular soldier, but he was still killed in the battle, just as Micaiah had prophesied (1 Kings 22:28).

Considering God's promise in Deuteronomy 20:1-4 that God would be the one who always gives the Israelites victory in battle, it was complete foolishness to go into battle without God. Deuteronomy 28:25 contains a warning for those who choose to disobey God. It says, "The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies."

We can learn a lot from the story about Ahab and Jehoshaphat. They ended up defeated because they tried to win the war trusting in their own strength. If we follow God's commandments and advice, He will be with us and provide guidance and victory. However, if we choose to be "wise in our own eyes," doing things according to our own plans and in our own strength, we can expect defeat.

Relevant Scripture

Deuteronomy 20:1-4 "When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say: 'Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.'"

Deuteronomy 28:25 "The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth."

Creative discipline

Here are some ideas to help you impress on your kids the importance of having a right view of themselves: acknowledging their tendency to sin, recognizing their incredible value in God's eyes, and being content with who they were created to be.

For problems with admitting sinfulness or admitting being in the wrong

The concept you'll want to share with your children is that if we think too highly of ourselves, it's easy to overlook our sins. If we claim to be perfect, or say that we don't sin, it's like telling God we think He is not telling the truth. But the Bible tells us that it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18).

Biblical basis

Psalm 36:1-2 "An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin."

1 John 1:8,10 "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. . . . If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives."

Proverbs 13:10 "Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice."

Proverbs 16:5 "The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

Suggested disciplinary action

The root issue in refusing to admit to being in the wrong is pride. A self-righteous person will not acknowledge their sinfulness. In order to be forgiven, we need to recognize and "own" our sin. As a parent, you cannot force your children to do this. It is a heart issue. You can make a child say they're sorry, but you cannot change an unrepentant attitude; only God can do this.

Your choice of disciplinary action should involve setting time aside for your child to do a "heart check." Be sure your child is in a place where they are away from any distractions and ask him / her to sit quietly and talk to God.

Gently, but firmly, tell your child that refusing to admit that they have done wrong is prideful, and that pride is not pleasing to God. Share Proverbs 16:5 and ask your child to have a talk with God about what an appropriate discipline would be for them. Tell your

child that you are going to have the same visit with God.

After the time out, if your child is repentant, you can share with him / her the good news of forgiveness and let him / her know that you think the time out was enough discipline. If your child remains stubbornly unrepentant, you will need to select another form of removing privileges until you see that your child is ready to admit that his / her actions were wrong.

Affirmation

The most wonderful news is that as much as God hates pride, He loves a sorry heart. Share what God says in Isaiah 66:2b. Pray with your child and thank God for their humble heart. Remind your child of the truth found in 1 John 1:9.

Isaiah 66:2b "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

For problems with self-acceptance, insecurity or viewing oneself negatively

It may seem harsh to discipline a child who already feels negatively about themselves, but what children who are insecure really need is *discipleship* – guidance in learning "God-confidence." The goal of discipleship discipline, in this case, is to help your child see himself or herself as loved and valuable, and as having potential to be used by God despite their perceived inadequacies.

Biblical basis

Your child needs to know that they are dearly loved by God and have been chosen by God to be His child! As God's children, the Bible asks us to "clothe" ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Our focus, as children of God, should be to "dress" or live in a way that honours God so that we can do the "God jobs" He has selected for us to do. (The Bible refers to this as

“bearing fruit.”)

Proverbs 29:25 “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”

Colossians 3:12 “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.”

Suggested disciplinary action

Take some time to read and review the Bible story “Moses is mousey,” then memorize Psalm 118:7a with your child.

Psalm 118:7a “The Lord is with me; He is my helper.”

Affirmation

Share with your child the idea that “under-confidence” can be a great reminder that we need to trust God instead of ourselves. Explain that, if we were already perfect, or fully capable of living life without God, we wouldn’t need Him. For this reason, we should be happy about the things we see in ourselves as weakness because our insecurities can remind us that in Christ we can be strong!

Pray together, asking that your child will put their confidence in God and be willing to do the jobs God has planned for him or her to do.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

For problems with jealousy and constant comparison to others

Kids can be very self-centered – some more than others. Your goal is to help your children understand that “pre-occupation with self” is wrong at any time, whether it’s thinking about oneself too highly, or constantly comparing our talents, resources or looks with other people’s. God doesn’t want us to be overly focused on “self” and personal attributes such as wisdom, money or strength. He wants us to concern ourselves with knowing and loving Him.

Biblical basis

Jeremiah 9:23-24 “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”

Suggested disciplinary action

When you see one of your children comparing themselves to another person, pull them aside for a “heart check” or a “time out.” Introduce the idea that being overly focused on oneself is pride. During your child’s time out, have them reflect on the question, What am I most worried about: pleasing myself, or pleasing God?

Your goal in this process is to encourage your child to be grateful for his or her gifts, rather than covetous of what God has given others. You want him or her to understand that God gives each person different gifts, and that they need to be content with the ones God gave to them.

Read James 4:1-3 together and note that the Bible says the outcome of wanting what others have is fighting and quarrelling.

Ask your child to thank God for two gifts God has given the person your child is comparing themselves with. Then have your child thank God for two things that are special about himself or herself.

James 4:1-3 “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You

kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Affirmation

Encourage your child to pray, admitting to God that they have been overly concerned about what they have or don't have, and about what others think of them. Ask God to help your child be content with what they have and with whom God made him or her to be. Encourage them to ask God to help them desire to be righteous and godly more than they desire status and “stuff.”

In God's Word, 1 Timothy 6 discusses seeking after money as a problem, but seeking anything more passionately than we seek after God is spiritually unhealthy.

1 Timothy 6:6-11 “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”

For problems with overly assertive or controlling behaviour (a.k.a. bossiness)

Sometimes poor self-image is manifested in overly controlling behaviour, or in a critical attitude. On the outside it may seem as though the child is assertive and confident, but in reality, they are hiding their feelings of inadequacy by attempting to elevate themselves and put others down. In you suspect this is the case, you can also refer to “problems with self-acceptance” within this section.

Biblical basis

Ephesians 5:21 “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Suggested disciplinary action

Explain that God is pleased when we follow Jesus' example of living to please Him and others, instead of ourselves. When we revere (deeply respect) Jesus and have His love in us, we let others have their own way instead of insisting on having things happen our way. This is called submission.

Have your child spend some quiet time away from the situation in which he or she was being overly demanding, selfish or bossy, and read to your child the last part the story of Jesus and the woman at the well found in John 4:27-34.

In this story, it sounds as though the disciples were pressuring Jesus to get on with His day and take care of His hunger (His own physical needs) instead of caring for the (spiritual) needs of the woman and others from her town. Jesus considered sharing God's love and the message of salvation to be so important that He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (John 4:34).

We can fool ourselves into thinking that getting what we want is more important than serving others, but life is more enjoyable when we follow Jesus' example of putting others' needs before our own.

Affirmation

Pray with your child and ask that God will fill your child with His love so he or she can share it with others by being considerate of their needs and by being willing to put others first, as Jesus did.

Mark 9:35 “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.’ ”

1 Corinthians 13:5 “[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

1 John 3:18 “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.”

Hands-on options

These fun ideas require very little preparation, making it easy for you to share some simple but memorable lessons with your kids. Choose just one or two ideas that will appeal to your children.

Dealing with put-downs and compliments

drama / role play

We cannot change our looks or our inborn abilities. Unfortunately, much of the teasing that goes on is focused on these “unchangeables.” Here are some ideas to help your children deal with occasional teasing.

- When someone is unkind to one of your children and is making fun of them in some way, teach your child to deflect the comment by expressing their confidence in God’s plan for them. Encourage your child to think to themselves, or to say aloud, “You may not like _____ (my hair, my face, the way I sing etc.), but God made me this way and I am going to enjoy being me.”
- Use the discussion questions to help explain to your children that although others may make fun of them, they can have confidence in knowing that God considers him or her a treasure, simply because God made them. (Further intervention must be taken if a child is the brunt of regular ridicule versus occasional teasing.)
- Also encourage your children to divert honour to God whenever people make positive comments about their appearance or their abilities. For example, teach your children to say, “Thank you for noticing how God made me unique.” (For more on honouring God after a compliment, see the hands-on option “complimenting God” in the humility lesson.)
- Practice these suggestions with your children, using stuffed animals to act as “bullies.” Allow each child to practice responding confidently in scenarios where he or she is being picked on. Be sure to practice receiving compliments as well.
- Even though we know that what God thinks is so much more important, unkind words from

others can still be very hurtful. Review with your children a strategy to diffuse the pain caused by comments made by other kids.

Questions for discussion

1. How can you choose to honour God with the special gifts He has given you?
2. What does a person say or do to bring honour to themselves?
3. When someone compliments you about your talents or your looks, how can you give honour to God?
4. If someone makes a negative or critical comment about your looks or talents, what should you do?

Note that the ideas here are not designed to address habitual cruelty. Bullying is a serious issue and if you suspect your child is being bullied in any way, do not hesitate to intervene.

Relevant Scripture

1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

“I’m special” poster

creative crafts

Help your children to recognize and celebrate their individuality by making a poster for each child that highlights the ways that they are unique.

Write the text below on each child’s poster, and help them add the suggested images.

I’m special.

In all of creation, there’s nobody like me.

Nobody looks exactly like me. (Help your child paste or draw their picture alongside.)

Nobody talks exactly like me. (Help your child write a favourite joke or funny phrase alongside.)

Nobody's handwriting is exactly like mine. (Help your child write his or her name alongside.)

Nobody likes all the same things that I do. (Help your child draw some of the things they like or are interested in.)

Nobody has all the same skills that I do. (Add a picture of your child doing an activity they are good at.)

God made only one "me," so I'm very special to Him. (Add a heart to symbolize God's love for your child.)

God has special plans in mind for me – things I can do for Him that need my special mix of personality, interests and skills. (Add pictures of simple ways your child can serve God. For example, add a picture of a bed from a magazine to illustrate helping Mommy by making their bed.)

Ask each child if there is anything else they would like to add to the poster to illustrate how he or she is special. When each child is satisfied with their completed poster, pray and thank God for making your children so special.

Song of assurance

drive time or any time

Most of us have sung the words to the song *Jesus Loves Me* over and over again. The beauty of this song is that it carries a message of assurance of God's love for each of us. Sing it daily and sing it as you drive.

If your children are very familiar with this song, you can add interest by singing it in a variety of music styles (for example, country, opera or rap) or sing it as different characters (for example, like a mouse, a moose or a football player).

Highlight the line in the song "for the Bible tell me so," and see if your children can think of a verse in the Bible that talks about God's love.

God's little helpers

serving others and creative crafts

In this activity, you'll each make a hand-print poster. Then you'll boost your kids' self-esteem by letting them practice serving others.

It's often said that a parent needs to "build their child's self-esteem." As important as it is to teach children to love and accept the way God made them, it's also essential to teach them to view themselves positively because they are God's "helper." As Ephesians 2:10 beautifully makes clear, not only do we find significance and value in being uniquely designed by God, but we also find significance by partnering with God in the good works He has planned for us to do.

To prepare, first read John 15:16 with your children and highlight the phrase, "I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit." Emphasize to your kids that they have been hand-picked by God to contribute to His kingdom and the lives of others.

To make your posters, you'll need the following supplies:

- sheets of plain white cardstock or poster board (one per child)
- newspaper to cover your work surface
- wax crayons
- paintbrushes
- diluted watercolour paints.

Here's how to create your posters:

- 1** Start by tracing outlines of each child's hands on their individual posters using wax crayons.
- 2** Have your children choose their watercolours, then paint over the outlines of their hands.
- 3** After you have painted over all the hands, use a variety of colours to fill in all the remaining white space on the posters.
- 4** While your children work, talk to them about how people can use their hands to help others.
- 5** Once your posters are done, set them aside to dry and decide on a specific service project that will allow you to "put into practice" using

your hands to help others. Here are some ideas to consider: giving back rubs, foot rubs, hugs, waving, smiling, dialling the phone to make an encouraging call, making roll-and-cut-out cookies for another family, and doing jobs like shovelling snow or picking up garbage. Pray together and ask God which “God job” He has planned for your family to do today.

- 6** While you are doing your service project together, refer to your children as “God’s little helpers” and let them know that they are valuable servants of God.

If you wish to extend the lesson, you can also keep track of the ways you use your hands to serve others by noting on each poster how that person served someone else.

Note: Another option is to trace each family member’s hands all around the border of your poster and use the centre portion to feature pictures of your family serving others. Add a verse from below if you wish.

Relevant Scripture

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.”

Favourite foods extravaganza

fun with food

Enjoy a special family meal together, serving your family’s favourite foods, then surprise your kids by affirming godly character traits you see in them. Your goal is to share with them the message “God delights in you!”

This activity need not take place during your main meal of the day. It could be a special lunch or snack, if you wish.

You will need to prepare ahead of time by making a “character trait affirmation card” for each child (see text ideas below). Next, place each card in an envelope and tape the appropriate envelope to the bottom of each child’s chair.

While you are eating, allow your children to take turns opening their envelopes. Read the verses and questions listed on each card to start a conversation about how living out that character quality causes God delight.

Here’s some suggested text for a number of different character trait affirmation cards: generosity, reverence, compassion, honesty, humility, faithfulness, obedience, kindness, righteousness and servant-hearted.

Character trait: Generosity

Key concept

God is delighted when we are cheerful givers!

Relevant Scripture

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

1 Corinthians 10:24 “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Questions for discussion

1. Can you think of some ways our family is generous?
2. Do we give cheerfully?
3. Are there any other ways you would like to be generous and share what God has given us?

Character trait: Reverence

Key concept

God delights in those who fear Him! (To “fear” God means to deeply admire, respect and be in awe of God.)

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 147:10-11 “His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.”

Questions for discussion

1. When are we tempted to be proud of our own strength or abilities?
2. What does God care about more: our hearts or our bodies?
3. What does it mean to “fear” God?

Character trait: Compassion

Key concept

God delights in showing mercy and He is pleased when we are merciful toward each other as well. God’s greatest gift of mercy is His willingness to forgive us.

Relevant Scripture

Micah 7:18 “Who is a God like You, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.”

Zechariah 7:9 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.’”

Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Matthew 25:40 “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’”

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Questions for discussion

1. What does it mean to “show mercy” to someone?
2. How can we be merciful to each other?
3. Are there any ways we can be merciful to those outside of our family?

Character trait: Honesty

Key concept

When we tell the truth, God is delighted!

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 12:22 “The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.”

Psalm 15:1-2 “Lord, who may dwell in Your sanctuary? Who may live on Your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart . . .”

Psalm 101:6-7 “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence.”

Questions for discussion

1. What does “detest” mean?
2. Are there any foods you detest?
3. Which foods do you delight in?
4. Do you think God would rather eat dessert, or listen to kids tell the truth?

Character trait: Humility

Key concept

God delights in and honours people who are humble!

Relevant Scripture

Psalms 149:3-5 “Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp. For the Lord takes delight in His people; He crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.”

Isaiah 66:2 “‘Has not My hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word.’”

Psalms 31:23 “Love the Lord, all His saints! The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud He pays back in full.”

Questions for discussion

1. How often do you sing in your bed?
2. What does it mean to rejoice?
3. What does it mean to “esteem” someone?

Character trait: Obedience

Key concept

God is delighted when people choose to obey Him and live righteously. God is also pleased when children obey their parents.

Relevant Scripture

Colossians 3:20 “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”

Proverbs 11:20 “The Lord detests men of perverse heart but He delights in those whose ways are blameless.”

Joshua 22:5 “But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to obey His commands, to hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”

Questions for discussion

1. Who is pleased when kids obey their parents?
2. What does “righteousness” mean?

3. What does it mean to be “blameless”?

4. What does “disobedience” mean?

Character trait: Kindness, justice, righteousness

Key concept

The Bible tells us that God loves kindness, justice and righteousness.

Relevant Scripture

Jeremiah 9:24 “. . . but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.”

Psalms 11:7 “For the Lord is righteous, He loves justice; upright men will see His face.”

Psalms 101:6 “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me.”

Questions for discussion

1. What does it mean to be blameless or upright?
2. Can you tell me what the opposite of kindness is?
3. What is the opposite of justice?
4. How about the opposite of righteousness?

Character trait: Servant-hearted

Key concept

God is pleased when we follow Jesus’ example and choose to please Him and others, instead of pleasing ourselves.

Relevant Scripture

Romans 15:1-3 “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please Himself . . .”

1 John 2:6 “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.”

Luke 6:31 “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Questions for discussion

1. What kind of attitude did Jesus have?
2. Did Jesus live to please God or Himself?
3. How can you serve others?

Lost and found

physical activity

Host a modified treasure hunt in your home by choosing five “treasured” items to hide (such as favourite toys, stuffed animals or special treats). When your children find their treasures, they’ll also find a quiz question taped to each item. When they put all their questions together, they’ll uncover the joy-filled message of salvation! (You’ll find the list of quiz questions at the end of this activity.)

To prepare your scavenger hunt, first pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give your children understanding of the truth of the good news of salvation and, if they have not yet done so, pray that they would accept it.

Next, print out a copy of each the numbered quiz questions (see text provided later).

Tape one clue to each of the five items that will be hidden in the room. (Or, to reduce competition, you can hide five items per child, rather than have all the children search for the same five items.) The quiz questions do not need to correlate to the items that will be hidden.

Before the hunt begins, let your children know where the search boundaries are. Tell them that the questions they find on their treasured items will help them uncover the answer to the bigger question, *What is the greatest treasure in the whole world?*

Have your children search until they find all the hidden items. Provide assistance as needed, using the terms “hotter” and “colder” to provide direction.

When your children have found all their treasures, help them place the treasures in order, one through five, according to the numbers on the quiz questions.

Ask your children if they can think of a story in the Bible that tells about a person losing a special possession. Take a few minutes to read The Parable of the Lost Coin from Luke 15:8-10. Compare your children’s hunt for their treasures to a parent looking for a lost child, or to God seeking “lost children.”

Note: If your kids show avid interest, you can conduct the treasure hunt a number of times before reviewing the quiz questions.

Questions for discussion

1. What did the woman in the story lose?
2. What did she do when she found it?
3. How hard was it to find all your treasures?
4. What did you do when you found everything that had been hidden?
5. What does the Bible say is the reason for rejoicing in heaven?
6. What is the difference between a person who is “lost” and a person who is “found”?
7. Has Jesus found you or is He still looking for you?

Key concepts

When we lose something of value, we search for it diligently until we find it. God is like a parent who loses a child: He searches for that lost child until he or she is found.

A person who is “lost” is someone who has not admitted that he or she is sinful and has not asked God to forgive their sins. They don’t know what it means to have Jesus as a friend and have not asked God to be the leader of his or her life. Many people in our world are “lost.” They don’t know that the greatest treasure in the world is knowing and loving Jesus, so they go hunting for other treasures, trying to make themselves happy in other ways.

Treasure hunt questions

Question #1

Who made you? How do you know if God loves you?

Key concept

God made each of us and He considers every person to have equal value. He loves each of us simply because He does.

Relevant Scripture

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Colossians 1:16 “For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him.”

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”

Question #2

Does God love you even if you have sinned? What kind of things do we do that are called sin? How do you think God feels about sin?

Key concept

As much as God loves us, He does not love our sin.

Relevant Scripture

Genesis 6:5-8 “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of His heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

Romans 3:22-24 “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:22-24 (paraphrased for younger readers) “Every person sins and no matter what a person does, they can’t get rid of their sin. It is impossible. All of us who sin deserve to die, but God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus died so that we don’t have to. This great gift is called “grace.” Even though we don’t deserve to be forgiven, God forgives us and sets us free from our sin simply because He loves us!”

Question #3

Do you have a choice about what to eat at supertime? How about snack time? What kinds of choices do we (your parents) give you? Can you choose to obey or disobey? What happens if you disobey? Does God force you to obey Him? Does God make you love Him?

Key concept

Every person has a choice to make in life: a choice to ask God to forgive their sins, to follow God and obey His commands, or a choice to live following their own plans and pleasing themselves.

Relevant Scripture

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Joshua 24:15 “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Question #4

What does God say will happen to those who choose to disobey or ignore Him? What will happen to those who love and obey God and His Word?

Key concept

God has made it very clear that those who believe that Jesus' death paid the penalty for their sins, who love Him and follow Him, will spend eternity in heaven with Him. Those who don't let God know that they are sorry for sinning, and who choose to live to please themselves, will not be able to go to heaven because their sins have not been forgiven.

Relevant Scripture

John 1:12 "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God . . ."

John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

Question #5

How can God tell if we love Him?

Key concept

The questions God wants us to answer for Him include: *Do you love Me? Are you ready to admit that you sin? Does it make you sad to see how much your sin disappoints Me? Do you want Me to forgive you? Am I your king, or are you living to please yourself instead of Me?* (John 14:15,21).

Relevant Scripture

John 14:15,21 "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. . . . Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him."

For another story that helps explain salvation to your children, see "the parable of the lost sheep" in the Bible stories section of the forgiveness lesson.

God is my bodyguard

drama / role play

For children who enjoy spirited play, this lesson about bodyguards is a fun way to help them find confidence in God's protection.

Begin by explaining to your children that some people are considered so important that they need special "babysitters" who travel with them everywhere to make sure that they stay safe from harm.

Next, use the discussion questions to explore the pro and cons of having a bodyguard. After your discussion, read all or part of Psalm 91, then play a game with your children where their toys have bodyguards watching over them. Create a scenario where all the bodyguards are too weak to overcome a danger (perhaps a doll has fallen into a river and is being carried over a waterfall), then have an "angel" step in to save the day.

Questions for discussion

1. Who do you think would need a bodyguard?
2. Why do you think these people pay other people to protect them?
3. What are the benefits of having a bodyguard?
4. How would it be a bother to have a bodyguard?
5. Do you think you would like to have one?
6. Did you know that you do have a bodyguard who is stronger, wiser and more powerful than any human bodyguard you could hire?

Read Psalm 91:9-12 aloud and tell your children about times when God protected you in a significant way.

Key concepts

Examples of people who hire bodyguards include royalty (kings, queens, princes and princesses), movie stars, high-level politicians, well-known musicians and many other rich and famous people.

These people think that they need the extra protection because they are worried that other

people may want to harm them or take them captive to get money. Having a bodyguard may protect you from harm, but it would be a bother to have to arrange to have a person go with you every time you went somewhere.

Most people don't have bodyguards, but those who love and follow God have something way better than human bodyguards: God and His angels watch over us! In the Bible we read that God sends His angels to watch over all the people who love Him (Psalm 91:14). The way God sees it, we are His children and we are highly valued and precious, like princes and princesses. As children of the King, we have God as our bodyguard.

Note: To add a craft component to this activity, decorate strips cut from cereal boxes and staple the ends together, making crowns to illustrate the royalty status we enjoy as God's children.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 91:9-12 "If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Psalm 91:14 " 'Because he loves Me,' says the Lord, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My name.'"

Hebrews 1:14 "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

John 1:12-13 "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God . . ."

1 John 4:4 "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

Jesus holds my hand

drive time or any time

When a child is worried, frightened or unsure of a situation, it's natural for the child to want to hold the hand of someone they trust. Holding hands reassures a child that they are with someone who is caring for them.

While you are out on a walk or shopping in a busy place and one of your children holds your hand, it's an ideal time to talk about "holding Jesus' hand." Let your children know that just as they can reach out and hold your hand for comfort, they can also reach out and ask Jesus to walk with them at any time (even when Mom and Dad are not around).

Discuss the special names your children call you (Mom, Mommy, Dad, Daddy) and ask if any other kids call you that. Explain that only children call their parents by these special names. Similarly, when we ask God to forgive our sins and decide to allow Him to be the leader of our lives, we are given the honour of being able to call God, "Daddy." As God's children, we can call Him "Abba, Father." We can call out to our Father in heaven at any time and He will be there to listen to our concerns and comfort us.

Ask your children to think of times when they feel worried or unsure of a situation. Let your kids know that at these times they can pray and ask God to hold their hand. Practice praying with them. For example, you could pray one of the following prayers:

Abba Father, right now I am going to the doctor to find out why my throat keeps hurting. I am a little worried. Would You come with me and hold my hand? Thank you and amen.

Abba Father, I am not used to staying with (a babysitter / a Sunday school teacher / at a friend's house / at school). Mom and Dad won't be here with me and I am scared. Please be with me and hold my hand. Amen.

Relevant Scripture

Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Romans 8:14-15 “. . . because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, ‘“Abba,” Father.’”

Galatians 4:6-7 “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘“Abba,” Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”

God’s love is like a drop of water: It goes on and on forever

science with a twist

Plan to explore the fascinating water cycle with your children. An ideal time to begin is while you are driving in your vehicle. Play a game of “I spy some water” and use the discussion questions to help your children consider the complexities of the water cycle.

While you are driving, invite your children to look at the wheels of other vehicles that pass by to see if they can see where the tires start and stop. (You want them to realize that circles and wheels have no beginning and no end, like the water cycle and like God).

Questions for discussion

1. Who can look out the car window and find some water? (We can find water in rivers, lakes, streams, puddles, and in the air as clouds, steam, fog, snow or rain.)
2. Is water hiding in places where we cannot see it? (Water can appear on our bodies as tears, saliva and sweat.)
3. Can you think of anywhere else that water may be hiding?
4. Do you think a person can live without water?
5. How about animals?
6. Do plants need water to live too?

7. What would happen to us and the rest of the plants and animals on the earth if there were no water?
8. Let’s try and think of a way to get rid of a drop of water. Do you think we can we do it? (Compare the enduring nature of water to God’s love, which never ends.)

Let’s try and think of a way to get rid of a drop of water. Do you think we can we do it? (Compare the enduring nature of water to God’s love, which never ends.)

At home, conduct this simple experiment that explores the stages of the water cycle: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, transpiration and accumulation:

- 1 Explain that **evaporation** happens when the sun or another heat source heats liquid water, turning it into vapor or steam. Water that has evaporated becomes moisture in the sky, often in the form of clouds or mist.
- 2 To demonstrate evaporation: Under careful supervision, allow your children to watch a pot of water boil on the stove. As the water boils, evaporating water is visible as steam rising from the water’s surface.
- 3 Now describe how **condensation** occurs when water vapor (steam) cools down again and changes back into liquid.
- 4 To demonstrate condensation: Show your children what happens when you hold a pot lid above the pot of boiling water. (Use an oven mitt to hold the lid, as it can get hot.) Draw your kids’ attention to the steam that’s forming visible water drops (i.e., condensing) on the underside of the lid.
- 5 Tell your children that **precipitation** is water that returns to the earth as dew, snow, rain, hail or sleet. Water falling from the sky is called precipitation.

- 6 To demonstrate precipitation: Watch the drops forming on the surface of the pot lid as they grow larger and heavier. Eventually they will begin dropping back into the pot of water (i.e., precipitating).
- 7 Now move the pot lid to allow the droplets to fall into a bowl. Collect enough “precipitation” to be visible in the bowl.
- 8 Describe how collection or **accumulation** occurs when the precipitation that falls as snow, rain, sleet or hail begins to collect in certain areas on the earth.
- 9 To demonstrate accumulation: Allow your children to take turns observing the accumulated water in the bowl.
- 10 Explain that **consumption** takes place during the water cycle too. Some of the water that sits in puddles, lakes and rivers evaporates, starting the water cycle all over again. But some of the water that sits in puddles, lakes and rivers is first consumed by plants, animals and people. It comes out of our bodies again in the form of waste, such as sweat, tears, saliva and urine, and then evaporates to continue the water cycle. Plants return water to the environment through a process similar to sweating (perspiration). In plants, when the leaves give off moisture like this, we call it transpiration.
- 11 To demonstrate consumption: Share out the water that has accumulated in the bowl and allow your children to drink it. Then play an active game that has everyone moving around enough to start sweating. As water begins to show on your skin, explain that water is coming from your bodies and evaporating into the air to cool your skin. That evaporating water is starting the water cycle again.
- 12 In conclusion, pray and thank God for designing water to give life to everything on the earth, and thank Him for His love that goes on forever and ever, just like a drop of water.

*Note: This discussion can also help a child who is fearful during electrical storms. Use the storm as an opportunity to assure your child that God loves them, and that He is in control. For more ideas, read the **Bible stories** “better than water wings” or “a rocking sail boat” in the **courage** lesson. In this same lesson, also see the **hands-on option** “I wanna hold the hand that holds the world.”*

Relevant Scripture

Job 36:27-33 “He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams; the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind. Who can understand how He spreads out the clouds, how He thunders from His pavilion? See how He scatters His lightning about Him, bathing the depths of the sea. This is the way He governs the nations and provides food in abundance. He fills His hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach.”

Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Psalm 106:1 “Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”

Psalm 135:6-7 “The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses.”

Romans 8:37-39 “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A love letter of affirmation

drive time or any time

Most kids love to get a letter in the mail. In this activity, you'll take time to write each of your children a letter, affix a stamp and post it.

Paul wrote Philippians and Corinthians as letters to two churches, assuring them of his belief that their faith in Christ would grow, and that God's power in them would provide all they would need for the kind of righteous living that would bring honour to Him. As you write your letters to your children, you may want to pattern the letters after Paul's example. Here are two ideas:

Dearest _____,

We thank God every time we think of you. In all our prayers for you, we always pray with joy because of your willingness to learn about God and your desire to live to honour Him. We are sure that God will continue to help you grow up into a young man / woman who loves and pleases Him. We love you and Jesus loves you!

Our prayer for you is that as you get to know God better and better each day, you will love Him even more. We also ask God to send His Holy Spirit to help you make choices that will please God so your life brings glory and praise to Him.

With love,

Mom and Dad

P.S. Our letter is based on Philippians 1:3-11.

Dearest _____,

Sometimes it's easy to think that we are pretty good just as we are and that we don't need God. No matter how good you think you are, please remember that all our righteousness comes from God! Our prayer is that others will look at you and the way you live your life and see that you are the way you are because you love Jesus.

There is no need to worry about whether or not others think you are perfect! What matters is that others see that you are allowing God's Holy Spirit to change you to be more like Him each day. We pray that others would see God's love in you and decide that they want to get to know Jesus too!

With love,

Mom and Dad

P.S. Our letter is based on 2 Corinthians 3:1-6.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 89:2 *"I will declare that Your love stands firm forever, that You established Your faithfulness in heaven itself."*

Romans 8:37-39 *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Fab feathers

science with a twist

To prepare for this activity, arrange for time alone with each of your children for a private chat. (Bedtime may be a good opportunity.) Ask your child to list all the good things about themselves. Then ask them to list all the things they would like to change.

Listening carefully to your child's answers will reveal whether they view themselves positively, overly positively or overly negatively. You'll use what you have learned to guide your discussion as your family completes the remainder of this exercise.

To continue, you will need to gather books about animals, or animal facts found on the Internet (try Cwf-fcf.org), plus paper and felt markers or crayons.

Have your children each draw a picture of an animal they like (or find pictures). Talk about how God has given each of those animals special features to help them function according to His grand design. Do some research together to discover the special

features God gave these creatures. For example, birds have very light bones and feathers that make them light enough to fly. They also have an aerodynamic body shape. Birds of prey are equipped with strong beaks and claws (talons) to help them catch their food.

Discuss how each part of the animal is essential for its survival. Use these discussion questions, or make up your own based on each child's animal of interest.

Questions for discussion

1. Would a dog be able to eat if it decided, "I get in trouble for barking all the time; I don't want to have a mouth anymore so I'll ask my owner to tape it shut"?
2. Could a bird still fly if it decided to get rid of its tail saying, "I don't need a tail since I never get to wag it like my friend the dog"?
3. What if a cow said, "I don't need a tongue; it's pink and rubbery, and people laugh when I stick it in my nose because they think it's gross"?
4. Could you ride a horse who said, "I don't need my legs; I'd rather be a crawler like my buddy the worm"?
5. If a grizzly bear wanted to get rid of his claws because he wanted to be cuddly like a teddy bear, could he still feed himself?
6. What would happen to a giraffe if it had a short neck? Why does a giraffe need a long neck?
7. What if an elephant said, "I must get rid of my trunk; it's just a long, funny-looking nose and I don't like it"? Would that elephant be able to move big things anymore?
8. Can you think of other things animals might not like about themselves?
9. Do people ever complain about how God made them? Do you think we should complain about that?

Note: Gertrude McFuzz by Dr. Seuss is a great book for encouraging children to be content with the way they were designed.

Humans are unique

creative crafts

In this activity, you'll explore how each person's fingerprints are unique, then create some fun animal drawings from your fingerprints. You'll need paper and water-soluble felt-tip markers. A magnifying glass adds interest, but is optional.

Begin by explaining to your children that they are each unique – a word that means "different from everyone else in a special way." Tell your children:

God made you according to a very special plan. There is no one like you alive today, nor was there ever anyone exactly like you in the past. In all of the world, there is not another _____ (insert child's name). That means you are unique!

One of the ways God made each person unique was to give them special "stamps" that are unlike anyone else's. Those stamps are our fingerprints. Fingerprints are so unique to each person, the police use fingerprints left at the scene of a crime to find out who did the crime. Our fingerprints are like a signature that no one else can duplicate.

When you are ready, you can begin making your fingerprint drawings.

- 1 Colour the fingertips of each child's dominant hand with a felt-tip marker and have him or her make fingerprints on a blank sheet of paper.
- 2 Take a few minutes to admire the fingerprints and view them through a magnifying glass, comparing them to fingerprints belonging to others.
- 3 Ask each child to think of creatures he or she could draw using their fingerprints. To get the ideas flowing, use your own fingertips to print a rabbit. (Use your index finger to make a head, your pinky finger to make long ears, a thumbprint for the body and pinkie tips for legs and a tail.) Other easy ideas include

bugs, butterflies, inchworms, owls, bears and fish. Add finishing touches like eyes, legs and whiskers.

4 Compliment each child on their creativity and be sure to admire each child's artistic efforts.

5 As you make your fingerprint creatures, discuss how God made humans unique among all His creation. Here are some ideas.

Skin and hair: Humans have highly sensitive skin that is not covered in fur. This allows us to communicate with each other through touch in ways that would be difficult if we were covered in fur or feathers. (*Stroke each child's head and cheek. Ask which is more sensitive: skin or hair-covered skin.*)

Brains: Our brains are designed so we can figure out very complicated problems. (*Show your kids a jigsaw puzzle and compare it to a toddler's puzzle with just a few pieces.*) Explain that very high functioning animals can do simple puzzles, but only people have the brain power to do difficult puzzles and solve complicated problems.

Hearts: God designed each person with a spirit. The spirit is the part of us that allows us to communicate with and know God personally. The part of us that is designed to know and love God is referred to as our "heart."

Creativity: Part of being made in God's image means we have been given the ability to think and create. We can draw or paint, and we can design and build things. We can make up stories, write poems, make music and write songs. Being creative brings us joy. (*Share with your children the idea that God is the greatest creator of all, because He designed us and the whole world – all that is in it.*)

Relational abilities: God designed people to enjoy other people's company. We are wired to love and be loved, to touch and be touched by others. People enjoy talking, telling stories and listening to each other.

This kind of communication allows us to share our lives with other people. God loves us and wants to be part of our lives too. Just like God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God wants to hang out with us.

Close by thanking God for making human beings special – different from all the other creatures He made.

Relevant Scripture

Jeremiah 10:12 "But God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding."

Psalms 139:13-15a "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place."

Pin the arm on the person

physical activity and creative crafts

Make a cardboard model of each child's body, then read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 aloud while your children "remove" various body parts and consider the implications of their loss.

You will need these supplies:

- poster board cut to resemble body parts for each child (head, torso, arms and legs)
- sticky-backed hook-and-loop fastening tape
- poster board scrap pieces or colourful construction paper
- felt-tip markers.

Here's how to make your body models:

- 1** Work with your children to craft cardboard human bodies. Their size and complexity is up to you, but you do need to make detachable parts for each body, including legs, arms, heads, hands, feet, eyes, ears and nose. Use sticky-backed hook-and-loop fastening tape to attach

the body parts. Glue on paper clothing to cover the body parts that need to be treated with special modesty.

- 2 After your children have completed their models, read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 and have your children act out the story, removing body parts as necessary, and making the body parts talk to each other.
- 3 When you have finished the reading, ask your children to restore their models to their original state. As they are doing so, use the discussion questions to talk about individual value.
- 4 Pray together and thank God for making each person in your family different so you can serve Him and others in a variety of ways.
- 5 When you see one of your children struggling with feelings of inadequacy, pride or jealousy, choose one of the Scripture verses provided here and add it to their body model.

Questions for discussion

1. What would happen if your eyes decided to quit working?
2. (Ask the same question about other body parts such as the lungs, heart, ears, stomach, muscles, brain etc.)
3. What has God made you good at?
4. How can you honour Him with this gift?
5. What can you do when you are tempted to consider yourself less valuable than others?

Key concepts

The Bible tells us that every person who loves Jesus is considered part of the “body of Christ” (also called the Church). Even within a group of people who all love God and serve Him together, people can be tempted to compare themselves to each other and be jealous.

In Corinth in Bible times, the people in the church were arguing and fighting over who was more valuable. Paul wrote a letter to these people using the analogy of the human body to help explain the value of each person. Paul pointed out that God gave each person a different set of skills so that we can all do different jobs to serve Him and serve each other.

Relevant Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Ephesians 4:15-16 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Romans 12:4-5 “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

1 John 3:18 “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.”

1 John 4:11-12,21 “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. . . . And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.”

You’re a treasure!

physical activity

Play a game of hide and seek where the kids hide while you search for them. As you are searching for

your kids, let them to hear you lamenting, calling out something like this:

Oh where, oh where are my precious children? How dreadful this is, I have lost my lovely kids! What will _____ (Grandma or Grandpa) say when I tell them I have lost our dear children?

When you find your kids, smother them with love, hugs and kisses and declare how happy you are to have found them.

After everyone tires of the game, sit down for a snack or cuddle time and use the discussion questions to help your children understand how much you love them.

Questions for discussion

1. Where was your favourite place to hide?
2. What was the best part of the game?
3. Did you have more fun hiding, or being found?
4. Would I / we be more concerned about losing you, or about losing \$1,000?

Note: For further discussion and a Biblical application, see “bought with a price” in the Bible stories section of this lesson.

“I love you this much” game

anytime

Use this fun, creative exercise to assure your children of your love for them. To play, follow the example below, taking turns coming up with words ending in “er” to explain the magnitude of your love.

Here’s an example showing how to use the game to emphasize Jesus’ love for your child:

Mariah: Do you know how much I love you?

Mommy: No.

Mariah: I love you bigger than an elephant. I love you cuter than a little puppy. I love you taller than the tallest mountain. I love you more green than spring grass. And I love you whiter than the snow. Now do you know how much I love you?

Mommy: Oh, yes! Do you know how much I love you?

Mariah: No.

Mommy: I love you faster than a galloping horse. I love you blue-er than your eyes. I love you more tumbly than when you do cartwheels. I love you more beautiful than sunrises, sunsets and rainbows. I love you squishier than our rubber animals. Now do you know how much I love you?

Mariah: Yes!

Mommy: Do you know how much Jesus loves you?

Mariah: No.

Mommy: This is how much Jesus loves you: He says, “I love you higher than the sky and as deep as the sea. I love you longer than the longest car ride you have ever been on! I love you with love wider than the ocean (extend your arms as though your hands are nailed to a cross). I love you so much that I died on the cross so that you could be My child.” Now do you know how much Jesus loves you?

Mariah: Yes! He loves me a lot!

Relevant Scripture

John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

Ephesians 3:16-19 “I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

The perfect balance

science with a twist and drama/roleplay

For this activity, you'll build a model balance scale large enough for stuffed animals to sit on, then find the perfect balance point between pride and self-doubt.

- 1 Roll up a thick bath towel up (width-wise) and place it on a solid surface.
- 2 Next, place the lid of a large storage container across the rolled towel. (If you centre the lid on the towel, it should be easy to find a balance point.)
- 3 Send your children to collect stuffed animals and dolls to be weighed on your scale.
- 4 Line the toys up to wait for their turn on the scale.
- 5 Before weighing any of the toys, explain to your children that one end of the balance is called "over-confidence" or "pride." The other end is called "under-confidence" or "self-doubt." The centre of the balance is the perfect sweet spot called "humble confidence."
- 6 After making sure your children understand which end of the scale represents pride and which end of the scale represents doubt, have your children take turns bringing an animal, doll or other toy to the scale. Your job, as the parent, is to express thoughts for each toy out loud. Using the scenarios in the table below, have a doll say, for example, "I'm so pretty I'm sure everyone likes me." Your children must then decide where that doll will sit on the scale.
- 7 Feel free to use your own ideas too, tailoring them to your children's specific successes and struggles. For further discussion, you could also ask how the different prideful or doubting attitudes could be corrected to find a perfect balance.

Questions for discussion

1. Where do you think God wants you to sit on the scale?
2. Is there one end of the scale where you are often tempted to sit?
3. How can you make sure that you end up in the "perfect balance" spot?

Key concepts

Under-confidence is lack of trust in God. Over-confidence or pride is thinking too much of ourselves and considering ourselves valuable because of what we have or what we can do. We find balance when we think highly of God and humbly of ourselves.

God wants us to know that He loves us just as He created us. He wants us to ask Him for help when our thoughts and attitudes start to get prideful or anxious. His plan is for us to trust Him to help us be who He planned us to be and to do the jobs He has planned for us to do.

Close your time by praying and asking God to help you all find the perfect balance, humbly honouring Him with all He has blessed you with, and trusting Him when you are tempted to feel inadequate.

Note: For maximum benefit from this activity, you may want to first review one of these three Bible stories from this lesson:

"Ahab's foolish confidence" (Ahab thought, I can do it on my own. I don't need God's help.)

"Moses feels mouse-y" (Moses thought, I can't do it – not even with God's help.)

"Asa has an A+ attitude!" (Asa's attitude was, God is great! With God's help I can do it!)

Relevant Scripture

Romans 12:3 *"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*

Scenario	Examples of pride	Perfect balance	Examples of self-doubt
Solving a problem	"I can do it on my own. I don't need God's help!"	"God is great! With God's help, I can do it."	"I can't do it! Not even with God's help."
Playing on a team	"I'm valued for what I have and what I do."	"This is really hard for me, but I'm going to ask God to help."	"I'm not valuable. I have nothing to offer others."
Meeting for a play-date	"I'm so pretty I'm sure everyone will want to play with me."	"I'm going to ask Jesus to help me be kind on my play-date today so my friend enjoys playing with me."	"I don't have any nice clothes to wear. The other kids won't like me because I'm not as cute as the other girls."
Faced with learning something new	"I'm smart. Everyone should listen to my instructions."	"God has given me an ability to think well, but it doesn't mean that He loves me more than He loves others."	"I feel like I am dumb. I will never be able to understand this game."
Attitude to possessions	"See my new truck? Do you like my new tractor too?"	"Even though I like my new toy a lot, I'm going to ask God to help me to remember to share it."	"I know for sure that if I share this toy with that kid, he is going to break it."
Inviting guests over	"Everyone likes to play at my house because we have the best toys."	"Even though we don't have the latest and greatest toys at our house, I think my friends will have fun because I'll be a thoughtful and kind host / hostess."	"I don't want to have a friend over because I don't have any fun toys."

Light brigade

creative crafts

In this activity, you'll make a paper bag lantern for each child and talk about how God's light and love can "shine through us" to others.

You will need battery-operated tea lights, an opaque cup for each child, a paper punch and paper lunch bags, felt-tip markers and / or a photograph of each child. You'll also need to prepare a darkened room.

Before you begin your craft, gather your children together in the dark room (take the tea lights with you) and talk about the darkness using the questions below.

Questions for discussion

1. Can we read a book in here?
2. Can we see each other's faces in the dark?
3. Do you like the dark?
4. Why are people scared of the dark?
5. What does darkness represent?

Now give each child a tea light and allow them to turn it on.

Read **1 Peter 2:9**.

After reading the verse, open the door of the dark room and go to your craft construction area. Allow your children to play with the tea lights while you talk about light.

6. Can we read a book in here?
7. How well can we see each other now?
8. Do you prefer relaxing in the light or in the dark?
9. Have you ever heard of someone being afraid of the light?
10. What does light represent?
11. What does the Bible say about light?

Read **Matthew 5:14** and **1 Thessalonians 5:5**.

Give each child a paper bag and have them draw a picture of themselves on it (or they can paste on a photo). Help each child punch some holes along their bag's seams.

Once the bags have been decorated, open them up and place one of the battery-operated tea lights at the bottom of each bag. Fold down the top edge to create a handle for carrying. Parade around your house and end up in the dark room.

While you are in the dark room, read **Psalm 37:4-6**.

Next, impress on your children the idea that *God's light in us makes us shine brightly for others to see*.

Close by sharing ways that others can see God's "light" in you. Pray together and ask God to help you "shine" in a way that brings honour to Him.

Relevant Scripture

1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."

1 Thessalonians 5:5 "You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness."

Psalm 37:4-6 "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

Mirror gazers and window gazers

anytime

Any time we become overly focused on ourselves (either thinking too highly of ourselves or negatively about ourselves), we lose our focus on God. Both viewpoints – pride and insecurity – take God out of the picture. This activity will give you a practical opportunity to help your children view themselves from a healthy, Biblical perspective.

You will need a mirror and a window that allows you to see outdoors, but also shows yourself reflected in the window pane. (You may find that this activity works best at dusk or after dark.)

Begin by having your children look at their reflection in a mirror. Next, ask them to look out the window. While they are comparing the two experiences, ask the following questions:

Questions for discussion

1. Who do you see in the mirror?
2. What do you like about what you see there?
3. What do you like best about the way God made you?
4. When you look through the window, whose reflection do you see?
5. What else can you see through the window?
6. Who made the _____? (Name some things your children can see out the window.)
7. If all you did all day was sit around and gaze in the mirror, what would you be missing out on?

To further help your kids understand the futility of living a self-centered life, tell your children a modified version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. You can use the sample story below, or simply tell a story about a popular, controlling child.

Pearl learns to look beyond her mirror

There once was a pretty young girl named Pearl. Pearl always wore cute matching clothing or fancy dresses. Her long, shiny, brown hair was often curled, or pulled back with a fancy headband.

Pearl expected everyone to think she was special. She would ask her friends questions like, “Do you like my dress?” Or “Did you notice what my mom did with my hair today?” When she played dress-up or make believe games, Pearl would sometimes look in the mirror and say, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of us all?” Then Pearl would quickly answer, “Pearl is the fairest in the land! Come, charming prince, and hold my hand!”

And as you guessed, people did notice and admire Pearl.

Pearl thought the best way to get other kids to like her was to continually point out how wonderful she was. Somehow she convinced nearly all the other girls in her neighbourhood that she should be invited to everyone’s house to play, and to all the birthday parties. “Of course, a party wouldn’t be a party without Pearl,” she would say.

Sometimes Pearl would hear of a party she had not been invited to. She would tell all the girls who had been invited to tell the host of the party that they wouldn’t attend unless Pearl was invited too.

Week after week, Pearl received more invitations to parties and playdates than any other girl in town. No one knew why everyone continued to do exactly what Pearl wanted. Perhaps they admired her boldness, and underneath they wanted to be as powerful as Pearl was. Or maybe the girls were afraid that if they left Pearl out, she would get mad and make the other kids angry with them too.

Pearl was quite pleased with the situation and enjoyed the attention from all of her “friends.” All was going quite well in her life until a new girl moved into their neighbourhood.

Sarah, the new girl, didn’t have the nicest clothes and she didn’t have the best toys at her house, but Sarah smiled all the time! When Pearl and her mother would drive or walk by, Sarah always waved. Pearl began to notice that almost every day there were girls over at Sarah’s house, playing in the yard or out on the sidewalk on their scooters. Instead of seeing Sarah as a potential friend, Pearl began to see her as a threat to her own popularity.

Pearl would say things to the other girls like, “What fun can it be at Sarah’s house? She doesn’t have any really nice dolls to play with.” Or “Who would want to be friends with Sarah? She seems, well, kind of boring. No new clothes ever and stuff.”

One day Sarah asked Pearl to come over to her house for a playdate. Pearl almost said no, but underneath she really wondered what it was like inside Sarah’s house and why the other girls seemed to like her so much. So the next day, Pearl went over to play at Sarah’s house, as they had planned.

Although Sarah did not dress or act like a beauty queen, after playing with her for the afternoon, Pearl could see why the other girls enjoyed spending time at Sarah’s house. Pearl didn’t even have to try to make Sarah notice her: Sarah already treated Pearl as though she was special.

Sarah showed Pearl around the house and asked her what she liked to do. After they were tired of playing house, they sat in the kitchen and had a snack. Sarah’s mom asked Pearl some questions about school and then they all played a guessing game where they had to take turns guessing each other’s favourite foods, colours and activities. Sarah laughed a lot – not at anyone, just in a bubbly, friendly way. The time went by very quickly and Pearl was surprised when her mom arrived to pick her up.

On the drive home Pearl told her mother, “I want to be Sarah Lansdown.”

“Why would you want to be her?” Pearl’s mom exclaimed. “She has mousy hair, no style, and I thought you said her toys were boring and out-dated.”

“But Mom,” said Pearl, “she was really nice.”

“Nice won’t get you anywhere,” Pearl’s mom replied.

Pearl tried to explain what made Sarah so different. “It was like she really liked me, Mom. I felt happy at her house. I’d like to live there. I’d like to have Sarah’s life.”

Now, if you like, you can invite your children to finish telling the story.

Questions for discussion

1. Why do you think Pearl acted the way she did?
2. Did Pearl spend life looking in the mirror, or looking out the window?
3. How about Sarah?
4. Which girl would you prefer to have as a friend?
5. Who taught Pearl to worry about what others thought of her?
6. What did Pearl learn from Sarah?
7. What do you think made Sarah different from other girls that Pearl knew?
8. How did Sarah make other girls feel special?
9. Which girl honoured God?

Key concepts

When we look in a mirror, all we see is our own reflection. We cannot see through the mirror to see other people, or the world around us. God wants us to enjoy being the way He made us, but He doesn’t want us to be so focused on ourselves that we don’t care about other people.

If we look out a window, we can still see our own reflection in the glass; however, we also see other people and the world around us.

God made people, animals, grass, trees, hills and mountains for us to enjoy. When we consider God as the maker of the universe and realize that we are just a small part of all creation, we are less tempted to be self-centered. Seeing life this way means we will be more interested in honouring God by sharing His love with others, than we will be in catering to ourselves.

If someone thinks only about themselves, they miss out on the joy of caring for others and enjoying healthy relationships. Friendships where everything revolves around one person’s needs are sometimes called “one-sided,” like a mirror. Healthy relationships are “two-sided,” meaning the people involved care about pleasing each other, not just themselves.

Mirror gazers (a self-centered perspective)

“Life is all about me, getting what I want and having fun.”

“The more I have, the better I look, the smarter I am, the more athletic I am, then the more popular and the more valuable I am.”

“The goal of life is to be happy.”

Window gazers (a Biblical perspective)

“Life is all about sharing Jesus’ love through caring about and serving others.”

“I am valuable because God made me.”

“The goal of life is to honour God.”

Relevant Scripture

Philippians 2:4 “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Hebrews 3:3 “Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.”

Acts 17:24-25 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.”

Masked reality game

creative crafts or drama/role play

Help your children thoughtfully choose a character they would like to be, then use large paper bags or paper plates to help your children make a mask featuring that character.

Caution your children to choose well, as they will have to wear the mask and pretend to be their chosen character for a long time. If they choose to be an animal, for example, they will spend a long time crawling on the floor. Caution them, too, that other people will treat them according to the character they choose.

Once your masks are ready, put them on and go about your usual tasks, but stay “in character,” with each person acting like the character depicted by the mask they are wearing.

Since masks limit vision, don't let your children wear their masks outdoors or for active play. For less visual obstruction, cut larger eye holes.

When your children are tired of play acting, move on to the discussion questions.

Questions for discussion

1. Why did you want to quit wearing your mask?
2. Who were you this morning when you got up?
3. Who will you be when you go to bed tonight?
4. Who am I?
5. Who was I acting like?
6. What did you like about being _____?
7. Was there anything you didn't like about being your character?

8. Would you want to wear a mask all the time?
9. What it would be like if a dog walked around acting like a cat? Or vice versa?
10. Have you ever wished you were someone else?
11. Why do you think someone would spend their days pretending to be someone they are not?
12. What do you think God would say if you went around pretending to be someone you are not?
13. Is there anything you think God would want to change about me or you?

Key concepts

Wearing a mask or pretending to be someone you are not gets tiring after a while. Some people who don't like themselves much actually hide who they really are from others. They think other people won't like who they are, so they say and do things based on what they think will make other people like them.

Doing and saying things to try to make people accept you is called “wearing a mask.” It's not a mask you can see. It means the person becomes very skilled at acting in a certain way to please others because they are afraid to just be themselves. It's hard work to wear a mask (real or make believe) all day long. It's much easier to be ourselves – the people God created us to be.

The only thing God ever wants to change about us is our sinful attitudes and behaviours. We don't need to “wear a mask” to cover up our sin because God already sees it! The best news is that when we let God know we are sorry for sinning, He is pleased to forgive our sins and promises to send His Holy Spirit to live in us and make us more like Him.

After your talk, pray together and ask God to help your children see themselves as He does – as loveable and full of potential.

Relevant Scripture

1 John 1:8-9 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and

will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Galatians 5:22-23,25-26 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

One leg, two legs

science with a twist

Play this balancing game to demonstrate that objects are more stable when they have a wide base of support.

You will need a safe, open space where each child can stand (and perhaps fall) without bumping into others, and also a backpack for each child that’s filled with a heavy load of books, rocks or cans.

You can do this activity at home in your yard, or indoors. Another ideal location for this activity is an outdoor park. As you drive home afterwards, you’ll have a captive audience for your discussion.

See the end note for an indoor alternative using building blocks.

When you’re ready to begin, your role is to call out instructions for various balancing challenges. Some will be difficult, and the children are likely to fail.

(If your kids are the type to fall over on purpose during the balance challenges, create a simple reward system. For example, one extra minute of storytime or one candy for each successful balance challenge.)

Begin by having your children stand on both legs. Call out the following instructions:

1. Can you raise your arms over your head?
2. Okay, now clap your hands together.
3. Can you put one arm out to the side?

4. Now lean forward and flap your arms as if you are a bird!
5. Fly faster! There is a bigger bird chasing you now!
6. Next, can I see you jump up and down?
7. Can you jump up and down and flap?
8. Can you jump up and down and flap and lean forward?
9. For your next challenge, pick up your backpack. Can you hold it directly out in front of you with your arms straight?
10. Now try to hold your backpack out to the side, using only one arm.
11. See if you can keep holding your backpack there after you close your eyes.

If you wish to up the ante, here are more ideas to make the balance challenges even more difficult. (Choose only those that are appropriate for your children’s ages and abilities.)

- Repeat the instructions with your children standing only on one leg.
- Repeat the instructions with the children standing on tip-toes (on two legs or just one leg).
- Repeat the instructions with your children standing on a ground-level balance beam (for example, a wooden railway sleeper bordering a sand box).

For extra fun, let your children try to push you over while you’re:

- down on “all fours” on the ground
- standing on both feet
- balancing on one leg
- standing on your tippy toes.

Questions for discussion

1. Was it harder to balance on two feet, or on one foot?
2. Was it harder to balance on flat feet or on tippy toes?
3. Was it harder to push me over when I was on “four feet,” two feet, or on my tippy toes?
4. If you were standing in a windstorm, which position would be most stable?
5. Why do you think that is?
6. How big is God?
7. How strong is God?
8. How big are we?
9. How strong are we?

Key concepts

God is big and He provides a firm foundation, just like a wide base of support does. In comparison, we are tiny, like a small base of support that can easily be toppled. If we base our confidence on ourselves, we are likely to “topple and fail” time and time again. However, when we place our confidence in God, we have a much firmer foundation to build our lives on and we will be much less easily swayed by forces around us.

Indoor alternative: Have your children experiment by building towers from blocks – towers with both wide and narrow bases. Once the towers have been built, test them to see how well they withstand various forces: wind (blow air), vibrations (shake the table) and even a “wrecking ball” (a tennis ball tied to the end of a string or slid down into the toe of a stocking).

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 59:16-17 “But I will sing of Your strength, in the morning I will sing of Your love; for You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength, I sing praise to You; You, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely.”

Jeremiah 17:7-8 “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Isaiah 31:1 “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord.”

Diamonds in the sun

science with a twist

In this “compare and contrast” exercise, you’ll examine the beauty of a diamond in the sun and liken it to a person who is reflecting the love of Christ.

Begin by showing your children a diamond in a dimly-lit room. The diamond seems able to catch and reflect all the light in the room.

Next, move to bright sunlight and show your children how much more light and colour the diamond reflects.

Finally, go into a completely dark room and see if the diamond is even visible at all.

Use the discussion questions to help your children think about how people can be like diamonds.

Questions for discussion

1. How are people like diamonds?
2. When are people like the diamond in the room with just a little bit of light?
3. How are people like the diamond in the dark room?
4. When are people like the diamond that sparkled in the sun?
5. Do you know what diamonds look like when they are dug out of the ground?

6. How do you think they get all cleaned up and pretty like this one?
7. How are people like “diamonds in the rough”?
8. How can God smooth out our rough edges and make us shine?
9. What kind of diamond would you like to be?

Key concepts

People are a lot like diamonds. In and of themselves, people can do kind things, be thoughtful to others and give generously. Good people are like diamonds in a dimly lit room. We find them attractive and enjoy being with them.

People can also be dreadful to each other. They can be like a diamond in a completely dark room. The diamond does not reflect any light at all and there is nothing about it that attracts us to it.

The most beautiful way to view a diamond is to see it in the sun. In order to shine brightly, the diamond needs to be in bright light. People are like the sparkly diamond when they follow God’s ways and reflect God’s love to others. There is no way we can reflect God’s love without His Holy Spirit helping us. We need to be filled with God’s Holy Spirit in order to “shine” in a way that makes others admire Him.

When diamonds are first dug up out of the ground, they are not polished and shiny. They look more like worn fragments of glass that have been washed up on the beach. Their surfaces are dull, and they don’t reflect light well at all. In this state, they are called “rough diamonds.” A professional diamond cutter has to cut and polish each rough diamond to make it sparkling and beautiful.

In a similar way, God smooths our rough edges and polishes us by sending His Holy Spirit to show us the sin He wants to remove from us. When we love and obey God, we get better and better at reflecting God’s loving nature to others.

Pray with your kids, asking God to fill your home and hearts with His Holy Spirit so your family can show others what Jesus’ love looks like.

Relevant Scripture

1 John 2:6 “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.”

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 “Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the confidence lesson at Kidsofintegrity.com.

Planning card for confidence

point form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I use my talents and abilities to honour God
- I trust God to help me when I feel unsure
- I accept and appreciate who God made me to be

My way

When I am tempted to:

- be unhappy with the way God made me
- compare myself to others
- worry about what others think of me

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about confidence by:

Date complete:

Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse:

Planning card for confidence

calendar form

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This week, we will focus on learning about confidence by:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Daily reminders: **PRAY!** | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse: