**Topic: Appearance**

**Bible Passage: Psalm 139: 13-16, 1 Samuel 16:7**

**Activity: What Would You change?**

Have students pick a partner and stand side-by-side with them. Instruct students to closely examine the appearance of their partner—and remember what they see. Have 1 student from each pair leave the room with another adult. While they wait outside the room, have their partners quickly change something about their appearance. For example, they can untie a shoe, switch a watch to the opposite wrist, or remove an earring. Students may also change multiple things about their appearance. Bring the students back into the room and have them reexamine the appearance of their partners. Give them an opportunity to find what was changed. Have the partners switch places and repeat the activity. An alternative to this activity can also be done by having 1 or 2 students leave the room, and have only 1 remaining student change their appearance. This makes the game more difficult.

**After the activity, ask the following questions:**

* What did you change about yourself when your partner left the room?
* What was the hardest change to notice on your partner?
* Is there anything about your appearance that you’ve ever wished you could change?
* What do you think is “beautiful”? What influences help you to decide that?

We’ve probably all wished that we could change something about our appearance or abilities. We fall into the trap of thinking that we’re not pretty enough, thin enough, funny enough, or whatever it is. And we think that it would be so different if we could just be like someone else or just be different than who we are. We forget that we are created in God’s image and that He formed us for a purpose.

As a young girl, Amy Carmichael consistently asked God to changer her brown eyes to blue. Her brother had blue eyes, and she wished that her eyes were blue. She would pray and ask God to make that changer to her appearance, but it never happened. As an adult, Amy Carmichael became a missionary that spread the Gospel in India for 55 years. She colored her skin with coffee so that she would have the appearance of the natives and be accepted in their culture. This helped her to gain their trust and tell them about Jesus Christ. One day, one of the Christian Indians said, “it’s a good thing that your eyes are brown. If they were any other color, the people of India would not trust you or listen to you. If they were blue, you would be arrested at once, and your work here would be ended.”

She realized that God had uniquely created her for a special purpose. As much as she wanted to look different and be different, God had made her according to the plans that He had for her life.

**Read Psalm 139:13-16**

One of the major ways that Satan tries to deceive us is by telling us that who we are is not good enough, pretty enough, thin enough, muscular enough, and so on. Everything we see around us is trying to tell us what “beautiful” is, but these are also deceptions. The truth is found in God’s Word.

His Word says, “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” **(1 Samuel 16:7)** God has created each of us for a purpose—for His purpose. And He judges our beauty by our faithfulness to him and our heart to serve Him.

Show a Geode to the students. Explain how the rock is very ordinary on the outside, and could even be described as ugly. It often has chips, cracks, and dimples that mark its exterior. However, the inside of the rock is lined with crystal formations of different colors that make the rock valuable and treasured. In the same way, God does not base our worth on the outward appearance, but instead He looks at the inside. He wants us to be men and women after his own heart.

**Break into small groups and read 1 Samuel 16.**

Have leaders explain the background story to the students. Samuel has been called by God to find and anoint the new King following Saul. Saul was handsome, tall, and fit the part of “king”. Samuel was looking for a similar person to fill the role. Samuel has found David’s older brother and thought he would be the one to anoint as king, but God says that He is looking at the inward appearance and not the outward appearance. He calls Samuel to anoint David because David was “a man after His own heart”. Following the reading of the passage, have groups spend some time discussing what it means to be a “man after God’s own heart.”

End the small group time by displaying some advertisements and discussing the lies that the images tell us [you have to have this product or look this way to be popular, successful, or happy; physical beauty, money, the “right” clothes or “toys,” are the keys to popularity, success, and happiness].

**Discuss the following questions as a group:**

* How does what we learned from God’s Word change your earlier definition of “beautiful”?
* What is the lie Satan uses against us concerning physical appearance?
* What are some of the messages the world tries to push on us about appearance?
* What is God’s truth concerning physical appearance?