

# Breathe

## Module: Following Jesus in the Day to Day

### Lesson 1: Self Image and Self Perception

#### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- express how God created everyone as special in His eyes
- use their understanding of God's plan as a way to start having empathy for others

#### Materials Needed:

- building blocks, small toys (things with detail), random items (some big and some small)
- 8 1/2 x 11 pieces of plain white paper – 1 for each student
- a surface to draw on
- coloured markers – 1 for each 2 students
- tape (optional)
- Bibles
- hand-mirror / small portable mirror
- pieces of paper (no smaller than 2 x 3 inches)
- music player and gentle/soft music
- garbage can

## **Pre-lesson preparation:**

- Make groups of no more than 6 of the items. You should have enough groups of items for every two students. So, for 12 students, you would need 6 groups of 6 items (36 items). If you don't have enough items, provide the students with an equal amount per pair, and ask the students contribute items (cellphone, earring, piece of gum, etc.)
- Prepare the clipboards or hardback books with plain paper for the first activity, and set out coloured markers
- Place the items on the clipboards/books on top of the paper, and place the clipboards and items in such a way that students will not have to crowd when they come to get them
- Prepare a piece of chart paper with the following questions written on it:
  - What does it mean that God has plans for us?
  - Why does it matter that God has plans for us?
  - How do you feel knowing that God has plans for you?
  - Do you think you need to be certain that God has plans for you in order to follow Him?

## **Minds On: (20 minutes)**

Once the students gather, have the students pair up with a partner (self-selected). Tell the students at the “Go” signal, the partner with the longer hair will come to get a set of items, and take it back to their partner. Take a moment to let them figure out who has longer hair. Say “Go”.

Tell the students that they are going to take turns building mini sculptures. They are to use the items provided, but could also use personal items, so long as there are no more than 6 items total in the sculpture, and the sculpture can be hidden behind a standard piece of paper. One partner will be the sculptor, and the other will be the drawer. While the sculpter builds, the drawer must look away! Give them about 1 minute to build the sculpture. When the sculpture is finished, the sculpter will hide the sculpture with a piece of paper. Tell the drawer that they will be given 10 seconds to look at the sculpture taking in as many details as possible, then 2 minutes to draw it. Tell them not to be worried about getting it right artistically, just to get the details. The first minute will be in silence, then for the next minute, they can ask questions of the sculpter.

After giving these instructions, announce, “Sculpters, show your sculptures” then count slowly to ten. Then say, “Sculpters, hide them!”. (The sculpters should hide the structures again.) Tell the drawers they have “1 minute of silent drawing, starting now.” Time the students, and remind them to be silent. After a minute passes, the drawers can ask questions of the sculpters, who can see the sculpture behind the paper. Remind the sculpter that their left and right are opposite to their partner’s. Allow them another minute, then say “Pencils and markers down!” Tell the sculpters to reveal the structure. Give the students a couple minutes to look at what they drew compared with what was actually in the sculpture.

Have the students switch roles, and repeat the exercise.

Leader's Note:

Watch for students using the camera on their phone to "help" remember!

When both groups are done, ask if any students want to share their drawing with the rest of the group. Take a few volunteers and ask if they want to say anything about their drawing. Thank the volunteers and allow them to sit down.

Depending on the questions they are asking and the direction of the discussion, ask:

Prompt:

What did you find about making the drawing that was difficult or easy? How was it different when you could talk with the sculpter? What would have made it easier for you to make an accurate drawing of the structure/object? Why was the sculpter able to give you such detailed information about the structure? What was it like to make the sculpture?

After the two minutes were up, and the sculpter revealed the different details that were there, would any of you draw anything differently? Would you feel like you knew what you were drawing a bit more because I have gone through and described what is there?

Allow for any answers and discussion. If there is none, then:

Prompt:

Just as each sculpter put thought into making this structure/display for you to see or draw, so did God when he created you to be a part of this world. In Psalm 139:13-14 it says: "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."

I want you all to close your eyes for a minute. Close your eyes. In a second, we're all going to take a deep breath in and then hold it for a couple seconds, to follow by letting it

out. As I count to three, slowly breathe in. One, Two, Three (deep breath in), okay now hold it for five seconds, and let it out slowly on three. One, Two, Three (exhale). Keep your eyes closed for another minute and listen. Imagine or recall, what it is like to create something on your own. Have you ever spent a lot of time building model airplanes or train sets? Have you ever spent time creating a craft, or a special meal? Maybe knitting a sweater, writing a poem, or doing a drawing. Maybe even a project for school. Anything you have created that needed your whole attention. Remember the care you put into it, how exciting it was to be working on something so special and that was yours. That's what God felt when He was creating you. He wanted you to be perfect, so he spent a lot of time thinking about you. What you would look like, what you would like to do, what you wouldn't like to do, what kind of friends you would like, who your parents would be. He loves you more than anything else, and He designed and planned you perfectly, even though you sometimes try to "draw" your life differently from His plan, his sculpture. If you ask, God will guide you to draw your life more like He planned, so you can receive His desire for your life.

### **Action: 20 minutes**

Have the students open their eyes. Tell them that in a minute as a group you will be standing up to create a circle and when they get to that circle, you will be passing around a mirror for them to look at themselves with. They can take up to 5 seconds with the mirror, but they are to think about what they see in the mirror and come up with one or two words that describe what they see. Tell them that when they do not have the mirror, they are to be silent and to either wait their turn, or if the mirror has passed, to wait for the whole circle to have had a chance to look in the mirror. Have students get in the circle and start passing the mirror around. Let students hold it up in front of their faces for no longer than 5 seconds.

Leader's Note:

Students could be silly at this point for two main reasons. The first is to avoid awkward moments, possibly if they are not 100% comfortable with the way they look or feel about themselves. The second is because this is a mature subject and they are still developing in their maturity. If there are any rambunctious or silly youth in your group, you may want to challenge students to be mature for this portion of the activity.

When everyone has gotten a chance to look in the mirror, have students sit down. Hand each student a small piece of paper and writing utensil, and then to write down what they saw in the mirror. Advise them that there is no right or wrong answer, and they can write down multiple words or phrases if they want. Tell them no one will be seeing what they write, so they do not need to be self-conscious about it. Give the students 30-60 seconds to complete this, and then focus their attention back on you.

Tell them in a few moments you're going to ask them to raise their hands about what category of thing they wrote down (don't worry they still won't have to share anything from their list).

Ask them to:

1. Raise their hands if they wrote something about their physical appearance
  2. Raise their hand if they wrote something about their feelings
  3. Raise you hand if they wrote something about a personality trait or characteristic
- (Pause after each statement, to allow for students to raise their hands and see who else raised their hand.)

Prompt:

When people look in the mirror, most automatically notice physical appearance. That is something that everyone can see. When others look at you they can see the shape of your nose, the colour of your eyes, your hairstyle, if you wear earrings, and so much more. The next thing people look at, especially when trying to become better friends you, is

what your personality is like. Those characteristics are not always obvious to everyone but make you who you are. Lastly, people get to see your feelings, which are more personal and you reveal them if there is trust in your relationship. [Pause for reflection]. As you can see, there are many different layers to who we are. People will reveal a different amount depending upon how comfortable they are with what they “see” in themselves.

Have a student or leader read Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT). It says “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’”

Leader’s note:

Sometimes this passage is taken to promise that a person will not face any hardship (sometimes called a “prosperity gospel”). The intent of this passage isn’t that nothing bad will ever happen, but rather, through all everything including the hard times, God wants hope for those who seek him.

Tell them they will be getting into groups in a minute to discuss what it means that God has plans, and why that might be important. While in their groups, they will be discussing four questions.

1. What does it mean that God has plans for us?
2. Why does it matter that God has plans for us?
3. How do you feel knowing that God has plans for you?
4. Do you think you need to be certain that God has plans for you in order to follow Him?

Post the prepared chart paper with the questions on it, so that they can reference it while in their groups. Ask them to try to discuss all of the questions briefly to start, but to go back to the question that is creating the most discussion and to focus on that.

Tell students when you say “go” they are to move to a group based on their birth month. Point to a location and say. “January-March will go here, April-June will go here”, etc. Say “Go” after identifying the four locations. Move students to even out the groups. If available, assign a leader to each group to work through the questions. Give about 5-10 minutes for this depending on your group. At the end of the task, bring the students back to the large group for a time of collective discussion.

Ask if any student would like to share with the whole group insights or questions they discussed in their groups. This does not have to be a lengthy discussion: hopefully they would have benefitted from the small group discussions.

### **Consolidation/Debrief: (15 minutes)**

Remind students that they were made in God’s image, and God would not make something that is not wonderful and amazing in His eyes.

#### **Breathe In**

Give students another piece of paper, or have them write on the back of the one they already wrote on. Have them take some time to think about something that someone has said to them that has affected how they perceive themselves (a put-down, name they have been called, something someone has told them isn’t ‘perfect’ about themselves) OR something that they do not like about themselves (whether it’s a physical appearance or imperfection in their character). Once they have thought about it, ask them to sum it up in a word or short phrase and write it down on the piece of paper. After writing it down, have them reflect on it, pray about it, and give it up to God and let go of the hurt or the pain that you have been holding on to. When they have surrendered it to God, have them crumple the piece of paper and throw it in the garbage can that you provide.

Leader's Note:

This could be a very sensitive time. Play some soothing music in the background and remind students to remain silent and when they are done not to talk to anyone. Prepare your leaders to pray with anyone who may be upset and have something that they need to talk to someone about.

Once you feel it is appropriate, turn off the music, and bring the students back together. Thank them for cooperating so well during what may have been difficult for some to think about.

### **Breathe Out**

Challenge students to consider the value and worth of others: friends, parents, teachers, even people they don't like. Remind them that everyone is wonderfully and fearfully made, whether they believe it or not, and that we only know someone as much as they allow us to know them. Challenge them to try to see what wonderful things God would see when looking at that person.

Pray over your time together and that God will give them the courage and strength to love others for who they are. Thank God for bringing everyone to youth group, and that he will watch over everyone as you leave from the church and to bring everyone back safely next week.

At the end of the lesson, take the garbage bag from the garbage bin, and tie it up as students are mingling or leaving, so they can see that no one will be rummaging through the pieces of paper that were thrown out. Throw out the garbage bag.