



GROWING UP

God's
Good
Story



LESSON 5

I have big feelings

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

faith  **kids**

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Growing Up - God's Good Story

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

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



LESSON 5

I have big feelings

1 Corinthians 6:12-20



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Truth that changes me:

We belong to the Lord who can help us to respond well to our big feelings.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who can make good choices with their strong feelings because they know who they belong to.

Preparation

As you prepare this lesson, we recommend watching the training video, and the introductory video if you haven't seen it.



Notes



Where are we going?

This lesson aims to give children a framework for navigating strong feelings. We want them to see that their feelings aren't meant to own them or help them get what they want; they're there to lead us into what Jesus wants for us. We look ahead to desire and sexuality without fear, knowing that we are both made to love and helped to act wisely.

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



The world our children live in

Our children hear that feelings should be acted on - "If it feels good, it is good, fullstop". Hookup culture is the norm and physical intimacy is entered into lightly - the average age that children first have sex in the UK is 16-17. We might ask, "If our feelings aren't meant to be followed, why are they there"?

God gives us feelings as a good gift - they tell us something but not everything. Satisfaction after hunger helps us understand how Jesus satisfies; loving others passionately helps us understand Christ's love for his Church. Feelings matter, but they don't master us. Our actions are directed by God, our maker who knows us and loves us.

As our children develop stronger physical attractions and desires, we'd love them to understand that we are much more than self-seeking pleasure machines - we are made to love and delight in Jesus. We belong to him and only he will fulfil our deepest desires.





Look at the passage



My Feelings Don't Own me

"I have the right to do anything' you say - but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything' - but I will not be mastered by anything.... The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

"I have the right to do anything" might feel like the anthem of this generation, but it's an age-old struggle. In 1st century Corinth, doing what you felt like (particularly sexually) was the order of the day. This verse tells us that as Christians we are changed to love and live for what is good, not to return to the sin that once trapped us. We are not meant to be victims of our feelings, driven wherever they lead. Instead we belong to a Lord who gives us our bodies, feelings, minds and souls. With him in charge, we can be certain we're heading somewhere good.

What I Do With My Body Matters

"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body." 1 CORINTHIANS 6:18

Hear the voice of your maker speaking in stark contrast to culture, 'Run away from sex outside of marriage.' No matter how you might feel, how good it seems, or what everyone else does - God says "Leg it!" What we do physically matters because we are more than just a physical body. The union of a man and woman in sex is the icing on the cake of a deeply committed, vulnerable and trusting relationship. You can't make intimate physical connections without it affecting the rest of you.

I Belong to God

"You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies." 1 CORINTHIANS 6:20

We are not ruled by our strong feelings and desires, because we belong to God, the awesome creator who designed us. Like the designer of a beautiful car, God watched on heart-broken as we wheel-spun his wonderful creation out of the garage and trashed it. The designer bought the wreckage back, paying top-whack, and is committed to restoring us to glory. Because of this, we live thankful, delighted lives that share with the world - 'My Dad's design is the best.'



Win my heart first

What is your favourite treat? Relaxing in the sunshine, catching up with a friend, Peanut M&M's, a cold beer, or perhaps something you'd rather not admit to? Our strongest desires can be great when they take us to godly rest and peace, but if we allow them to master us, that good thing that is meant to take us to Jesus can become a god thing that rules us. What if that desire grew until it was no longer under our control? Can we tell when a strong desire has become a damaging force in our lives?

For your heart, before you prepare the lesson.

continued →

Being ruled by our desire to have, consume, enjoy, escape, is not who we were made to be. We belong to the Lord. When we live ruled by feelings alone, seeking self-satisfaction, we don't honour our bodies like God wants us to.

- Where in your life might it be tempting to be ruled by your strong feelings?
- How might it look different to let those strong feelings take you to Jesus?



5 minutes to focus on your group

Thinking about the children in your group, where are they slaves to their feelings? Where do you see their wildest emotions? Where are the tantrums, the manipulation and the lying to get what they want? How can you help them understand that their feelings are God's good gift, but they aren't meant to be in charge.

What do the children in your group need?

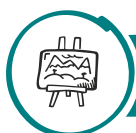
*Pray for them:
• to grasp the truth*



In case you're feeling nervous...

- We focus on feelings children can identify with now - happiness, anger, sadness - and only briefly look ahead to bigger feelings to come, such as sexual desire. We want the children to go away understanding what God says about our feelings, so they can respond to them well now and in the future.
- Children with SEN may particularly struggle with this lesson, particularly with talking about their own feelings and understanding other people's. That's OK. This lesson is just as true for them, even if they find it harder to put into practice. We want to help to start a good conversation about feelings with all children.

We understand this might feel daunting. We are starting a conversation not completing it.

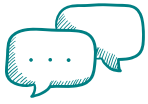


Series overview visual

The series overview visual (see p.16) helps to explain the foundation of this series. Because God created us, he knows us better than anyone else. He gets to tell us who we are.

The visual shows a person hearing messages from themselves - these are thoughts and feelings (represented by the thought clouds); messages from others - including other people and the media (represented by speech bubbles); and messages from God - what he has written in the Bible. The crown shows that God's messages are the most important - we only let other messages stick if they say the same things as God says. God made us and loves us more than anyone, great delight comes from listening to him.





All-together time



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



Props

Large sheet of paper and pens, sound clip of a running engine, toy car, two strips of paper as roads / crossroads, a screen/device, series overview visual (see p.16)



What to Say



What to Do

Have you ever been in a car?

A big one, a small one, a racing car, a taxi - so many different kinds...
I'm going to design a brand new car this morning.

Draw the outline of a car on a large sheet of paper - narrate as you go.

Wow, look at that, my very own car... I wonder if I've missed anything?

What are cars made to do? - *drive/go places*

What do they need to do that? - *an engine*

Colour in the tyres.

Draw the outline of the engine.

We have a maker, a designer who carefully built our brilliant bodies - our eyes, hair, arms, legs - every part of us is God's good design.

Just like a car is made to go places, we were made to love God, to be like him.

And like a car is powered by an engine, we are powered by our strong feelings - to love football, to enjoy friends, to think broccoli is disgusting.

Draw the outline of a person.

Add details.

Draw a big heart shape - draw stars or symbols in the heart as you speak about loving things.

Our strong feelings can take us to good places.

Feeling hungry tells us to ask for a snack.

Feeling pleased to see someone leads us to give them a hug.

But our feelings aren't meant to be in charge, because sometimes they are not good.

We feel like stealing somebody's sweets, telling a lie or ruining a game.

Let's look back at the car. The engine makes it go, but it isn't in control - imagine the chaos if it was!

What controls the car? - *the steering wheel & driver.*

The driver controls the engine and uses the steering wheel to direct the car - it's teamwork and the driver is the boss.

Add a driver to the drawing.

Place road strips on the floor.

Drive a toy car along.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

Our strong feelings are important, but they aren't in charge. There is a team working together under the boss - Jesus - so we can make the best choices about how to act. In your team are you - your thoughts and your experiences - and the grown-ups in your lives...

So that, in the moment, when you are loving being on your device... but it is time to turn it off, you feel angry. What will you do? Throw a tantrum, run off with the screen, or think - my mum who loves me and wants good for me is saying "Time's up." I could listen to her.

Or when a friend annoys me, and I strongly feel like punching them - I take a breath, I think about what I should do, I know what those who love me would tell me to do - and then I choose how to act, to walk away and ask for help.

That's what it looks like to control our strong feelings.

As we grow up, we will experience new stronger feelings, to try exciting things, to be the best we can be and to have feelings for other people.

When you find yourself thinking, "I feel like I love that person more than anything - I want them to like me" - that feeling is good and exciting and you didn't choose it - but you can choose how you act, taking your time, listening to people who love you, thinking about consequences, to make choices that look after you, your body and other people.

A lot of people say, "If you feel it, do it".

But God says, "You are not your own, you were bought with a price, therefore honour God with your bodies." (1 Cor 6:20)

We belong to God! What we do, who we love, and how we treat people's bodies matters because we are his. We want our children to see that we don't always act on our feelings, we have a better driver - God who made us and loves us.

Look at our series visual. We hear messages from the world around us, from our thoughts and feelings and, most importantly, from God. Listening to God more than to our feelings will help us make good choices about relationships in the future. When we have a really strong feeling, let's ask God's Spirit to help us know what to do.

Parents, we want our children to learn that we don't always act on our feelings. The foundations we lay now will help them as they face the challenges of adulthood. So much of the current debate about gender and sexuality is based on, "If you feel it, do it." We want our children to know that we have a better guide to follow than our feelings, we have a heavenly father who made and loves us.

Pray: Father, thank you for giving us feelings. By your Spirit, please help us to be people who trust you more than our own big feelings. Amen



What to Do

Hold up your device/screen.

Put it down.

Hold up fists.

Lower fists.

Walk yourself along the road.

Act out turning like the car did.

Read verses.

Show series visual.



7s and under lesson plan




Get going

Traffic Lights

The game is about being in control. Each child pretends they are a car and 'drives' around the leader in the middle of the room, they must control their car - everyone driving in the same direction looking out for the signals from the traffic lights. When the leader holds up a coloured card, they should control their car to follow the instruction.

- Red card = Stop/freeze
- Amber card = Slow down & rev your engine ready to go
- Green card = Go - drive around the room

You could introduce a simple course around your space with a turn off or a T-junction.

 **Link:** Was it always easy to stay in control? Did you want to run around crazily sometimes - or go the other way to everyone else? Imagine if you were on a real road with real cars - how would that go? Today we are thinking about our strong feelings. Love, anger, excitement and fear are a good gift from God, but they should not control us. God can help us to control them.



Teaching time

I Belong to God

"You do not own yourselves. You were bought by God for a price. So honour God with your bodies." **1 CORINTHIANS 6:20 (ICB)**

Draw around a child on a large piece of paper / wallpaper.

Remind them that God has given them an amazing, unique body.

- God says your body is a good gift - draw a smiley face
- God says you belong to him - add a sticker / write on the person, saying "I belong to God".

Read the verse.

God also gives us feelings to help us enjoy life, stay safe and work out what to do.

Ask children to tell you some feelings - draw emojis / write them on the outline.

continued →



Notes

You will need: 3 different coloured cards to hold up - red, amber and green like a traffic light.

You will need: Large roll of paper, pens, Bible

My Strong Feelings Don't Own Me

Today we're thinking about really strong feelings - *draw a large scribbly ball in the chest of the outline.*

Strong feelings can be good. If we really love jelly babies we want our friends to know they are yummy, so we share. When we feel sad that someone is being left out, we want to be nice to them.

But sometimes our strong feelings can take over. Loving sweets could mean we ate too many. Loving our friend could mean we got angry if they played with someone else.

Explore strong feelings - what do the children really love? Add them to the drawing.

- *What makes them cry when they don't have it?*
- *When do they get angry or mean because they want more of something?*
- *When do they feel so happy they could dance or leap for joy?*

Sometimes it feels like our strong feelings are in charge, but the Bible tells us the truth - our strong feelings don't own us, because we belong to God - *point to the words on the drawing.*

I Can Make Good Choices

Let's imagine what this body could do if the strong feelings were in control.

A strong feeling of being angry with my sister - what might I do with my hands? Or my feet? *Ask the children to act out a response/draw on outline.*

A strong feeling of really wanting the toy someone else has - what might our hands do? What might we say? *Act out response/draw on outline.*

We can make good choices with our strong feelings by listening to God, who made us and loves us. What would it look like to listen to God more than our feelings?

God knows that we sometimes let our strong feelings take over and do what is wrong, and he is able to forgive us. When Jesus died on the cross, he was paying the price for all the times we act like we don't belong to God and he was bringing us back into his family. God promises to help us make good decisions with our strong feelings, we can ask him for help when it is hard.



Refer back to the car illustration from the all-age talk if you feel it would help the children understand who we want to let be in control.

continued →




Brain break

Different Feelings

Clear the space so the children can move freely between zones. Read out different experiences and ask the children to move to the zone that matches how they would feel if this happened. Encourage them that they will feel differently about some things, and that's OK. Ask them to tell you what feeling they had if they chose "Something else".

- We're going swimming
- It's jelly for pudding
- No more screen time
- It's raining
- There's a big dog
- Pizza for tea

 **Link:** In this game - you had different feelings and responses to the things I mentioned. God has given us different feelings, some of us really like jelly and don't like dogs. Our feelings are part of how God makes us - today we've learned that they don't control us, they don't own us because we belong to God.



You will need: Four zones to run to - labelled "Happy", "Sad", "Angry", "Something else." If you have young children who can't yet read, you could draw an emoji to label the zone.



Heart & hands

CRAFT TIME

God helps me to make good choices badge

Have items for drawing and decorating e.g. pens and stickers and a safety pin or sticky pad for the back. Add different coloured paper ribbons to the bottom with the truth that our big feelings don't own us, they aren't in charge, because we belong to God.

As they decorate their badges and you stick them on - remind the children that God made their bodies and gave them their feelings. Their big feelings don't own them, they aren't in charge - because they belong to God.

You will need: A prepared heart badge with the words "God helps me to make good choices" on (see p.17).

Prepare in advance: Cut out the heart and ribbon shape.

Use this craft time to reinforce the **Big Idea** of the lesson to get them ready for Think Time



continued →



Think time

Big Question: Who gave you your big feelings?

A follow up question: Who has God given you to help you make good choices with your big feelings? *Children can list anyone as an answer.*

Prayer

Say together: Heavenly Father, thank you that you make us differently and give us our feelings, help us to live enjoying you, trusting you and listening to you. Amen





8s and over lesson plan



Notes

You will need: A prepared list of questions where the children have to choose what they would rather have.




Get going

This or That?

Either let the children take it in turns to sit in the "hot-seat" and be asked the "This or that?" questions, or get the children to move to one side of the room or the other depending on their choice. A chosen child could make up the questions. To get you started...

- Chocolate or sweets?
- Shower or bath?
- Dogs or cats?
- Homework or vegetables?
- Swimming or jelly?

Have some fun as you ask the questions - notice any strong reactions.

 **Link:** Today we are thinking about our strong feelings. God made us all differently, we all like different things and that's part of his good plan. God gave us our feelings, we are free to like and not like things, but our feelings aren't in charge. They don't own us when we belong to God.



Teaching time

I Belong to God

"You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies." 1 CORINTHIANS 6:20

Show a name label in a coat - "I belong to..."

God has given you an amazing body, designed just for you. As people saved by Jesus' death, we belong to God twice - he made us and he saved us! It's like we have a double "I belong to God" name label.

God also gives us feelings to drive our actions, like an engine drives a car. Some people say we must always follow our feelings, but that is like letting an engine run without control. God says we have more than our feelings driving us - we can pause, listen to those who love us and think about what God wants for us.

You will need: Bibles / verses printed out, large sheet of paper, pens, name label in clothing

Use car example from all age talk.

continued →

How could the following feelings take over in a negative way?

- Hunger (after a long time since your last meal)
- Fear (something frightening is happening outside school)
- Desire (someone has something you have always wanted)
- Love (your best friend is playing with someone else)

How could those feelings drive your actions for good? What would it look like if each of those feelings led you to do good?



Your Feelings Don't Own You

"I have the right to do anything," you say - but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything' - but I will not be mastered by anything. ... The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body." 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-13

We're going to learn how we use our strong feelings to honour God.

Have the verse written out on a large piece of paper and break it down.

Start by finding the difficult words and explain what they mean; "the right", "beneficial", "mastered". Highlight, with different colours:

- What sounds like good advice?
- Does anything sound too difficult or frightening?
- Is there anything they don't understand?

These questions might help explore the verses:

"I have the right to do anything" - That sounds like huge freedom - are you surprised that this is in the Bible?

"Not everything is beneficial" - That sounds like real wisdom - we all know that some things aren't good for us.

"I will not be mastered by anything" - Can you think how things we love can start to seem like they control us? Think about an argument with a friend or sibling, over a screen, or over doing your homework. Sometimes we let our strong feelings take over - God wants to help us with this.

"The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" - We can't choose our feelings, but we can choose what we do with them. If Jesus is Lord of our bodies, we are not ruled by our feelings. Instead, we listen to how God tells us to live.

As we grow older, we will have new strong feelings about who we find attractive and who we might fall in love with or want to marry. God is really clear that sleeping together belongs in faithful committed marriage and that marriage is between one man and one woman for the whole of their life. We might have strong feelings of love for someone God says that we cannot marry. When strong feelings arrive we don't let them take over, we don't have to follow them. We live with Jesus as Lord and trust what he says, because he loves us and wants what is best for us.

Can you think of any challenges Christians could face as they let Jesus be Lord more than their feelings?

God promises to help us make good decisions with our strong feelings, we can ask him for help when it is hard.


continued →



Brain break

String Obstacle Course

Blindfold a child. They need to feel their way forward using the string as a guide to get them past the obstacle to the other side of the room. Watch out for low obstacles that the children can hit their heads on. Consider having a leader at that obstacle to warn and protect.

 **Link:** This game was about being led - you were led by a string that guided you safely. Following the guide well should have stopped you from hurting your body - banging your shin on a chair / head on a table. We can navigate our feelings and our bodies well by trusting God to guide us.



You will need: A scarf or a jumper as a blindfold; a length of string tied across the room, e.g. tied to a chair leg at one side of the room, under a table, to a chair leg at the other side of the room.



Heart & hands

Did you spot it?

- What have we learnt about our feelings? Who gave them to us? Are they always good? Always bad?
- How do we decide how to respond to our feelings?
- How can we decide what to do with our bodies?

Work it out

- Looking at our series visual (see p.16) - where are the strong messages coming from in today's lesson? *From other people? From our parents? From inside ourselves? From thoughts or feelings?*
- What are some of those strong messages?
- What do you want to remember to help you to live differently as someone who belongs to God?

Live it out

Look at case study picture A (see p.18) where a boy is playing on a games console surrounded by a mess in his room with dishes on the floor. It's dark outside and he has rings under his eyes. He looks tired and pale.

- Who or what is in control here? How can you tell? What clues can you see to work it out?
- What have you heard today that could help him make better decisions?
- What could you say to him to encourage him (to look after his body and mind well)?

We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section

*These questions can mostly be found on the **Chat Time** (see p.20-21) sheet which has been designed to aid your discussion. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together. Make sure each child can still answer the personal questions honestly for themselves (e.g. hand out Post-it notes for them to write/draw their answers to these questions).*

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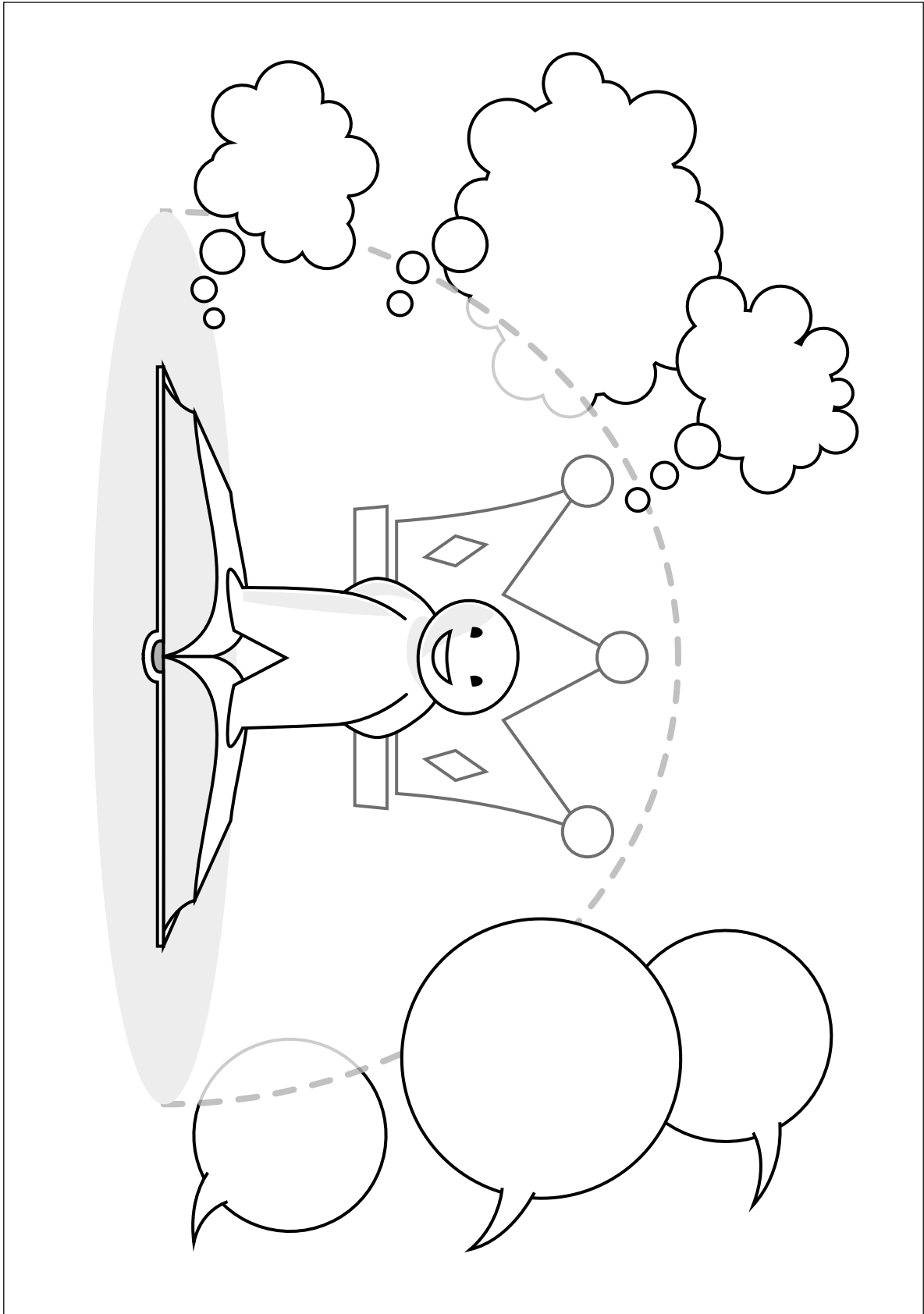
Look at case study picture B (see p.19) where a girl is standing watching three other girls as they are pointing at and being mean to another girl who is sitting on her own. The girl standing on the edge of the group is thinking - "I really want to have friends and fit in, I really don't want to be left out like she is."

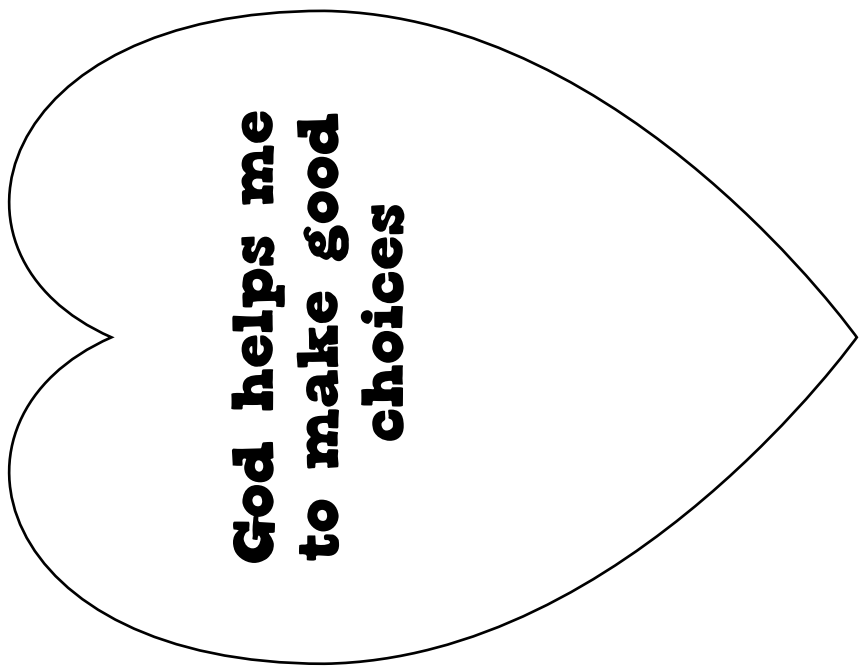
- What is good about her feelings of wanting to be liked and have friends?
- How could her feelings of wanting to fit in lead her to make unkind choices?
- What could you encourage her to listen to as well as her feelings? How might this change how she acts?

Prayer

Thank God for giving you feelings. Ask God to help you listen to him and let him be the driver, not your strong feelings. Ask God to help you to make good choices with your body when you have strong feelings about how to act.



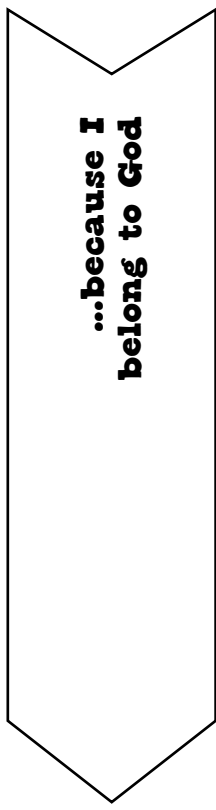




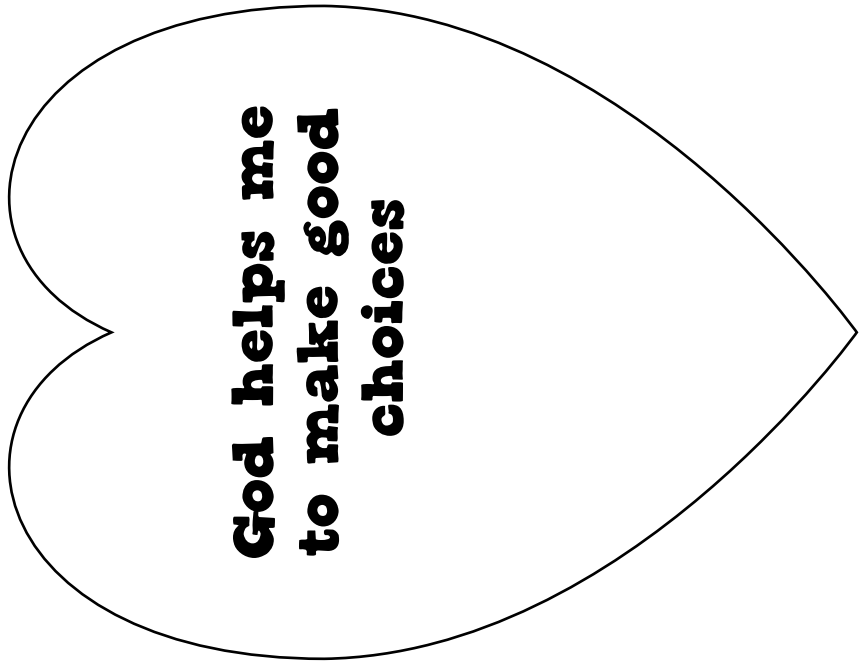
**God helps me
to make good
choices**



**My big feelings
don't own me, they
aren't in charge...**



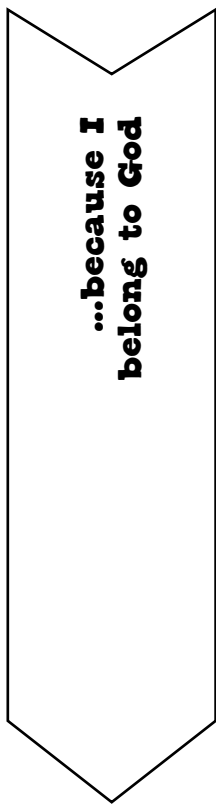
**...because I
belong to God**



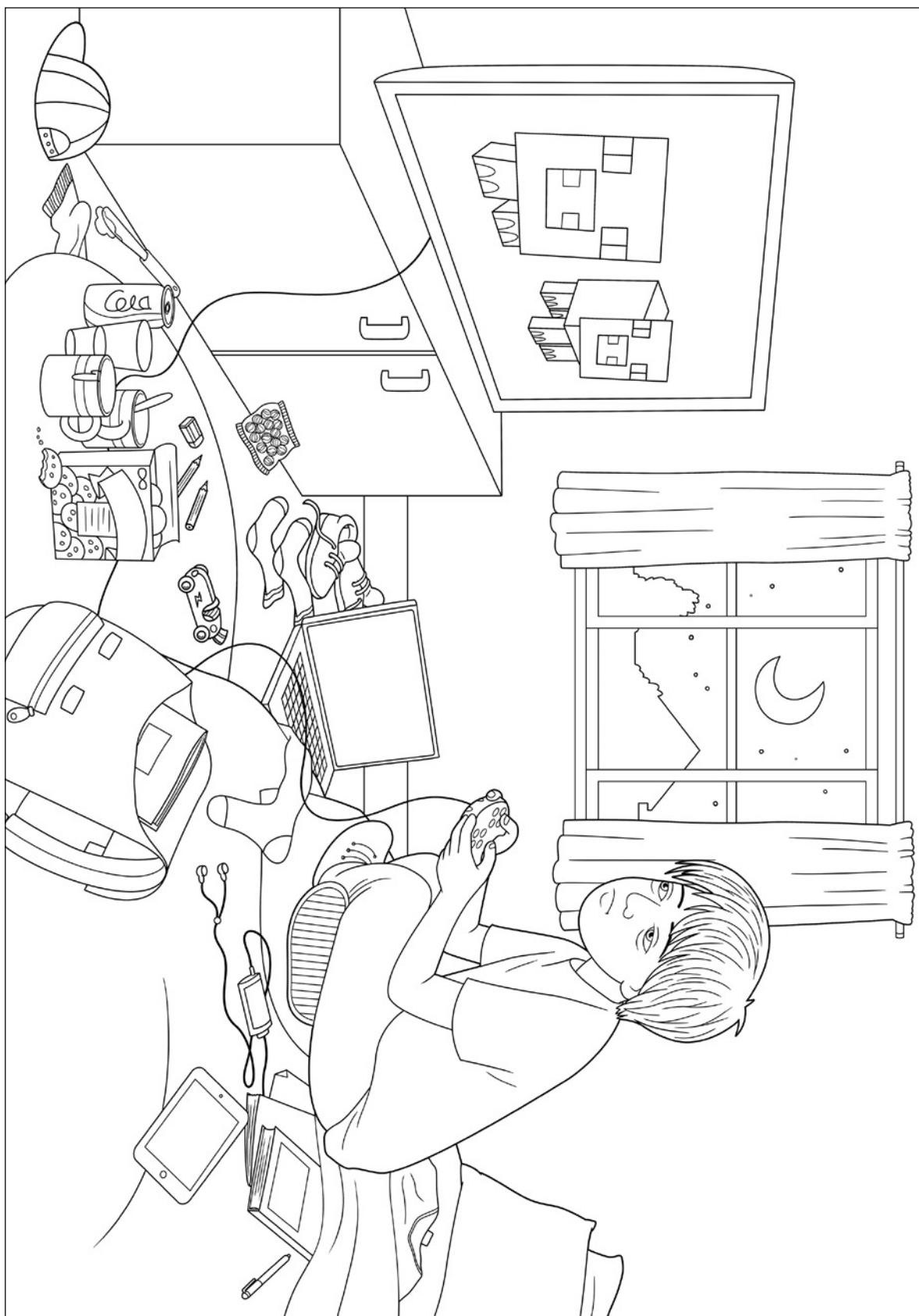
**God helps me
to make good
choices**



**My big feelings
don't own me, they
aren't in charge...**



**...because I
belong to God**



Case Study picture A





Heart & Hands Chat Time



1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Look at these verses together and find the answers



Did you spot it?



Who

gave us our bodies and feelings?

What

have we learnt about our feelings?

(add a cross on the sliding scale)

Always bad

Always good

How can we decide how to respond to our feelings?

How

can we decide what to do with our bodies?



Work it out

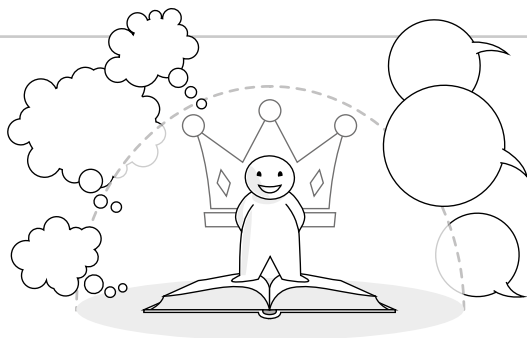
Give everyone a chance to answer

Where

are the strong messages coming from in today's lesson?

What

do you want to remember to help you to live differently as someone who belongs to God?





Heart & Hands Chat Time



Live it out



Who or what is in control here? How can you tell?



What have you heard today that could help him make better decisions?



What could you say to him to encourage him (to look after his body and mind well)?

What is good about her feelings of wanting to be liked and have friends?

How could her feelings of wanting to fit in lead her to make unkind choices?

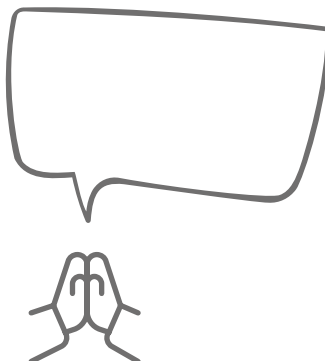


What could you encourage her to listen to as well as her feelings? How might this change how she acts?

Thank God for giving you feelings.

Ask God to help you listen to him and let him be the driver, not your strong feelings.

Ask God to help you to make good choices with your body when you have strong feelings about how to act.





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GROWING

God's
Good
Story

LESSON 5

I have big feelings

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

faith  kids

Take
home
truth



Read and understand

I have big feelings

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

TRUTH = We belong to the Lord who can help us to respond well to our big feelings.

FAITH = Children who can make good choices with their strong feelings because they know who they belong to.

"I have the right to do anything" you say - but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything" - but I will not be mastered by anything... The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body!"
1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

"You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies."
1 CORINTHIANS 6:20



Talk together



7 and Under

- What strong feelings can you think of?
- Sometimes a strong feeling is like a fizzing ball inside you. If that feeling was in charge:
 - What might your hands do?
 - What might your feet do?
- What would be different if you listened to God more than your strong feelings?



8 and Over

- How do you think the girl on the wall and the girls in the group might feel?
- Imagine that the girl watching feels desperate to have friends and fit in. How could this feeling take over and lead her to make bad choices?
- What difference could listening to God make?



Live it out

This week, see what different feelings people show about things that happen in your house, eg.

- "It's pasta for tea."
- "It's PE today!"
- "There's no more broccoli!"

Does anybody smile? Jump up and down excitedly? Get cross or sad? Do something unkind or naughty because of their feelings?

Connect to the truth

- Our feelings are a good gift from God
- But they aren't in control
- We belong to God and want to listen to him more than our feelings

Pray

Draw some different emoji faces on a piece of paper:



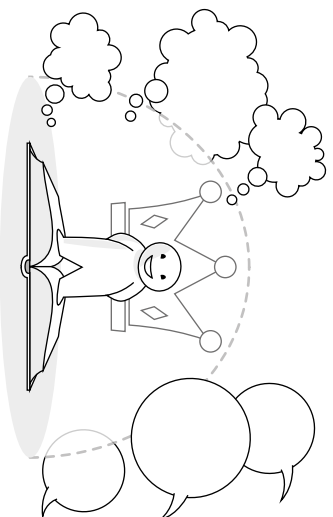
Thank God for your feelings – the things you love, enjoy and how they can help you stay safe.

Point to a feeling that you find hard to handle. Ask God to help you when you feel that way.

Let's be people who trust God to help us with our big feelings.

God's better story

- My feelings don't own me – they are God's good gift, but they aren't meant to control us. We can't always control how we feel, we can choose what we do.
- I belong to God – he helps us to make good choices with our big feelings. We listen to God, who made us and loves us, more than we listen to other voices - including our feelings.



We've got more on this topic on our podcasts. Listen in and carry on the conversation.



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