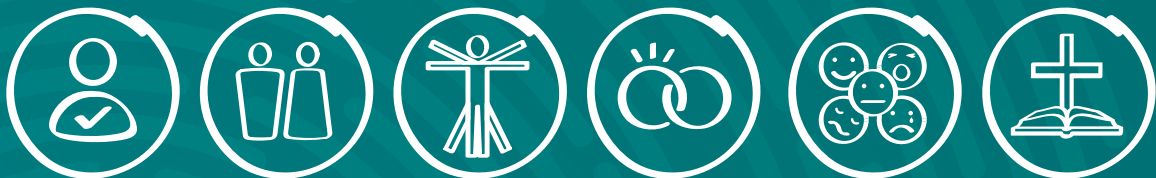


GROWING UP

God's
Good
Story

R U N N I N G A S E S S I O N
F O R P A R E N T S

**Growing Up: Talking bodies,
puberty, gender and all
that good stuff**



faith **in** kids

Goals of this session

- To *inform* parents of what we are covering in this series
- To *encourage* parents to have conversations with their child around these topics
- To *equip* parents so they feel confident to have these conversations



Why?

The topics covered in this series mostly fall in the overlap between being culturally red hot, being at the very heart of young people's identities and being relationally awkward for parents to discuss. Although these topics are of utmost importance for our young people, few parents feel able to start conversations about them. A session for parents in preparation for covering this series has several benefits. Parents will learn what their children will be taught and be given help to start meaningful conversations at home on these topics. Importantly, parents might also discover that they are not alone in feeling inadequate for the task. The questions and comments of others might start conversations between parents in your church as they explore the great support network around them each Sunday. An effective session for parents could be a catalyst for learning, encouragement, forgiveness, healing and courage. Let's pray for that!

How?

You could run it in a home or in a church building. You could run it on a midweek evening, or after a service or while the youth group is meeting. You could run it in person or online. The advantage of running it online is that you may be more likely to get both parents and single parents attending. The disadvantage is that it is harder to have good conversations. As with all the details of the session, you are best placed to make these decisions as you know the parents and your context better than anyone.

Ask a few parents to come with stories to share and questions to ask about the topics covered. If one or two are willing to be vulnerable and open then others are more likely to follow. It will help if you have a few examples to illustrate how young people are thinking, behaving and being persuaded about these topics. Parents are helped by you painting a picture of the world their children are living in. Ask some parents for examples in advance if you need a few more.

What?

Before the evening, print a copy of the document, "Parents session: handout" for each parent attending. If parents are unable to attend it would be good to give them a copy of this handout before you start teaching the sessions.

Introduce the evening, explaining the purpose and plan. Highlight the topics the series covers.

You could start by reading the passage from Session 6 to set the scene: To be teaching our children God's ways as they are growing up, is to be encouraging them to live distinctive lives, shining like stars.

Starter Questions

- What did you already know and how did you learn about these topics when you were your child's age?
- How much did your parents talk to you about them?



Encourage the parents to try to have these conversations with their children. Remind them that they are best placed to talk to their own child, even if these topics seem like a stretch. They may not be an expert on current youth culture, but they are an expert on their child - they know them better and love them more than any other person. There are some conversation starters and questions to accompany each lesson at the end of this session plan. You could give this out to parents at the end.

Go through the 'session content table' which is provided as a separate document, ideally giving everyone who comes their own copy to look at. Explain the overall structure of the series:

- Session 1 is introductory and foundational to the whole series.
- Sessions 2 & 3 cover issues around bodies including gender, puberty, consent and respect for their own and other people's bodies.
- Sessions 4 & 5 cover marriage and desires, touching on sex and sexuality.
- Session 6 concludes by asking the young people to live according to these principles, distinctively listening to God.

Spend some time taking a deeper look at each session. The discussion questions below are suggestions for how to get parents talking about these topics with you and each other.

Session 1. Read the contents of the table.

Share the series overview visual. Explain that this is the foundation of the series, that our young people are hearing messages from others, from their own thoughts and from the Bible. Who will they listen to? Highlight that often young people don't realise how deeply they are affected by the messages they are hearing.

Which messages do you think your child is hearing most loudly?

Are there any voices they listen to that you are particularly concerned about or encouraged by?

Sessions 2 & 3. Read the contents of the table.

Have you already discussed any of these topics with your child? How did it go?

Is there something here that you would like to talk about with them?

Do you have any tips or questions for others?

Sessions 4 & 5. Read the contents of the table.

When it comes to marriage, desires and sex, there will be a huge diversity of responses and thoughts in 11 to 14 year olds, as desires and thinking are developing at this stage. What unites this age group is a desire to belong, to fit in and to be needed.

Have you already had any conversations around marriage, sex and sexuality?

If you have, do you have any pointers for us, of what helped or how you approached it?

Session 6. Read the contents of the table.



Do you think your child understands that Christians are called to live differently and shine like stars in the world?

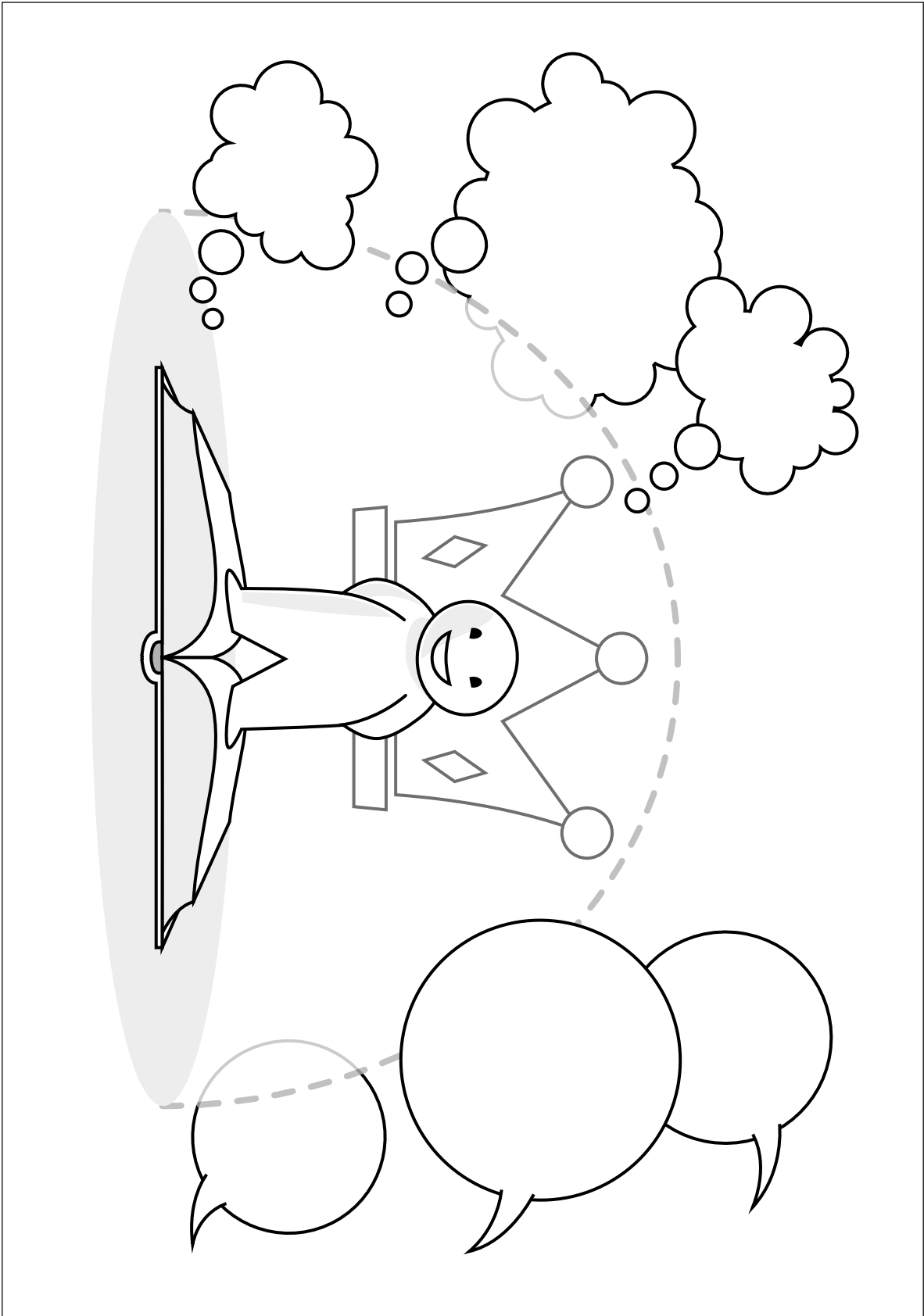
Do you have any top tips for how we can help our children to live distinctively without being excluded or feeling like they are missing out?

Reassure parents that there is still time to start these conversations, even if they feel like they are getting to it late. Share some ideas about how parents could have a meaningful conversation with their child:

- **Pray:** pray for opportunities, pray before, during and after the conversation. Pray for yourself and your child to be patient and gracious. Pray for God to be at work in both of your hearts.
- **Prepare yourself beforehand:** If you feel anxious, think about what your specific concerns are and ask God to help you.
- **Pick your moment carefully:** Talking whilst doing something else is often easier than an intense conversation. The car is a great place for conversation!
- **Ask questions:** If you aren't sure how to respond to something your child says, ask a question, such as, "why do you think that?" or "where have you heard that?". This allows them to clarify what they mean and gives you time to think.
- **Try not to appear shocked:** You might get answers you didn't expect or didn't want to hear. Remember that it is much better that your child feels able to say these things to you rather than keeping them secret. Do your best to remain calm, listen carefully and reassure them of your love. If you feel you don't know how to respond, say you'd like some time to think about what you've heard and then talk again later.
- **Don't feel you have to cover everything in one conversation:** This is especially true if your teen disagrees with you and/or what the Bible says. They're unlikely to change their mind instantly so resist the urge to try to win the argument now. You have time for God to be at work. Concentrate on keeping communication open, speaking the truth calmly and consistently through multiple conversations and praying for them.

As we finish, let's take stock

- Is there a particular thought you leave with?
- Is there a conversation you feel ready to have with your child?
- Is there a question you want to think through further?





Faith in Kids exists to encourage, inspire and equip influencers of faith in children with support, training and resources.

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