

GO! / THE LOOK?

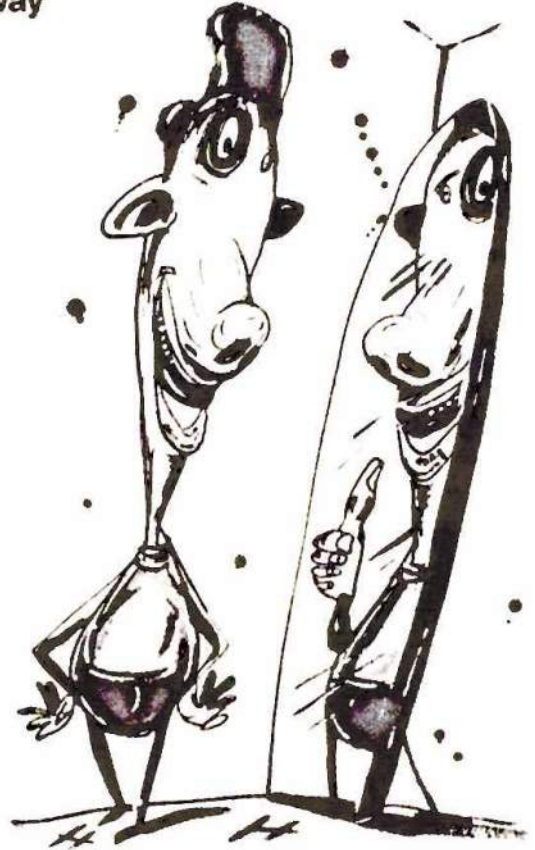
1. If you could change one thing about your appearance, it would be—

2. Rank the following reasons to dress in a particular way from best (1) to the worst (10).

- I feel comfortable this way.
- I just wear what others expect me to.
- I don't want to be obviously different.
- I want others to notice me.
- I want to please God.
- I wear what I want because I buy my own clothes.
- I dress to please my parents/guardians.
- I dress to show off my body.
- I want to make a good impression.
- I throw on whatever's clean and in my closet.

3. What do you think—T (true) or F (false)?

- If you look good in it, wear it.
- I'm judged by how attractive I am.
- I usually feel self-conscious about my appearance.
- I dress deliberately to attract attention.
- It's acceptable to follow the latest fashion.
- Most people are hung up on appearance.
- Another's appearance doesn't alter my opinion of them.
- People who are good looking have a big advantage.
- It's okay to have plastic surgery to improve your looks.
- It's worth risking your health to lose weight.



4. How would you rate the following categories? Matters to God (1), matters little to God (2), matters to God because it matters to me (3), or doesn't matter to God (4)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My style of clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> My physical attractiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My hairstyle | <input type="checkbox"/> My sex appeal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My personal hygiene | <input type="checkbox"/> My overall health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My height | <input type="checkbox"/> How much money I spend on my appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My use of makeup | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My weight | |

5. Choose one of the following verses, and rewrite in your own words.

1 Samuel 16:7

Proverbs 31:30

GOT THE LOOK? | p h y s i c a l a p p e a r a n c e |

THIS WEEK

Looking good is one of the biggest pressures among youth today—on the TV, radio, from friends, parents, boyfriends or girlfriends, the Internet, and more. It's no wonder that American girls are becoming victims of eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia. They are a society obsessed with looking good and fitting in. This TalkSheet gives your kids the chance to talk about to physical appearances and discuss how their attitude affects them as Christians.

OPEN

Since the media is the number one influence on our looks, ask each person to cut out at least two pictures from magazines or newspapers that emphasize physical appearance. You can either do this within the group or have them bring pictures from home. What advertisements, articles, pictures, or statistics can they find?

Then take a look at each example and talk about how each one deals with physical appearance. Point out that in most ads, it's the looks of the person that sells the product. What does the picture show? How does that make the reader feel? What is the solution?

You may also want to talk about other media influences that stress good looks, like TV shows or movies. How can your kids keep a healthy perspective of themselves in a culture that idolizes the beautiful people? How can they resist the pressures to look and feel good without going overboard?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Not everybody will want to reveal their answers to this question, but if the kids are comfortable with each other, a few might. Begin by answering it yourself. Why would your kids change what they listed?
2. This will get your kids thinking about why they dress and look the way they do. Most say they don't want to conform, yet their appearance reflects the opposite.
3. Since personal appearance can be hard to talk about, bring up these statements in a general way. Don't ask for personal examples—a few might come out later. And don't be afraid to deal with the hurt, anger, and frustration many of your kids feel about their appearances. Each of your kids will have hang-ups about their looks and that's okay. Remind your kids that they're created by a God who made them unique in their own way. Be particularly sensitive when discussing the issue of harming oneself to lose weight. The number of teenage girls with anorexia or bulimia is alarmingly high, so be careful not to ridicule those who suffer from these disorders.

4. This will bring up a discussion of to what extent God cares about their appearance. Again, keep this discussion general and don't force anyone to share their personal opinions.
5. You may want to divide the group into several small groups and give each one of the a passage to paraphrase and then ask them to share the results.

THE CLOSE

There may be a lot to wrap up with this one! Emphasize that it's okay to want to look good and to take care of our bodies. But your kids shouldn't become obsessed with how they look. God wants us to take care of ourselves, both inside and outside. That means we can look good on the outside, but what's going on inside of us? Are your kids spending time on their character—who they are and what they believe? Are they letting God work in our hearts and minds? How can they balance wanting to look good outside and becoming better people, too?

MORE

- How do people try to change their physical appearance? Brainstorm with your group and make a list of ways that people alter how they look. For example—fad diets, plastic surgery, liposuction, steroids, weight lifting, eating disorders, and so on. How do these change how people feel about themselves? What would God say about spending money and time on these things?
- Some females in your group may be struggling with eating disorders. You may want to spend some time talking about these eating disorders and how to get over them. For information and links, check out the American Anorexia Bulimia Association, Inc. (www.aabainc.org) or The Center for Eating Disorders (www.eating-disorders.com). Be sure to encourage anyone who is struggling with an eating disorder to find help immediately. Emphasize the harm that these disorders cause to relationships, physical health, and emotional health. And be sure to remind them that you are there for them, as is God, who understands the pressures to fit in and look good.