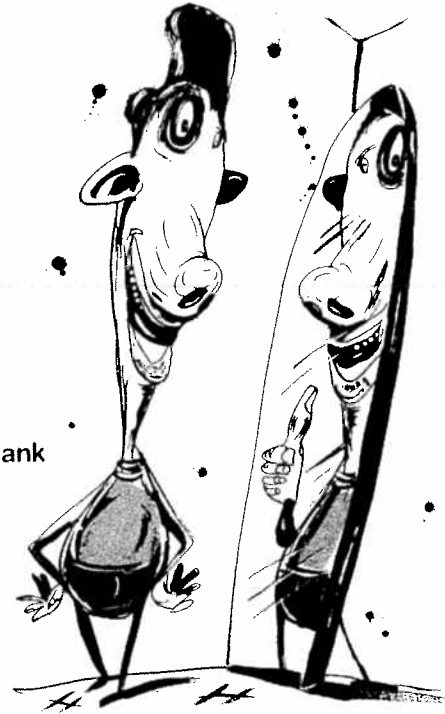


GOT THE LOOK?



1. What's your opinion?
The most handsome **guy** in the world is—

The most beautiful **girl** in the world is—
2. Which of the following is most important to you? Rank from **most important (1)** to **least important (7)**.
 - ___ My looks
 - ___ My abilities
 - ___ My personality
 - ___ My intelligence
 - ___ My health
 - ___ My wealth
 - ___ My relationship with God
3. **Finish this statement:** If I could change one thing about the way I look, it would be—
4. Mark these statements **Y (yes)** or **N (no)**.
 - ___ The last thing I usually do before leaving my home is look in the mirror.
 - ___ Good-looking people have more friends.
 - ___ People usually judge others by their physical attractiveness.
 - ___ I usually feel self-conscious about the way I look.
 - ___ I enjoy dressing to attract attention to myself.
 - ___ It's okay to wear the latest fashions and fads.
 - ___ Sometimes I wish I looked like someone else.
 - ___ I don't let a person's appearance affect the way I think of him or her.
5. Take a look at these two verses and summarize each one in a few sentences.
 - 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 victims of eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia. We are a society obsessed with looking good and fitting in. This TalkSheet gives your kids the chance to talk about physical appearances and discuss how their attitude affects them as Christians.

OPENER

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 THE NUMBERS

1. Who does the group think has the look? Let them discuss why they chose the people they did.
2. Nobody (most likely) will put their looks as number one. They might put something else and some will list their relationship with God first. Ask the kids how much time each day they spend on their appearances. How long does it take them to look good? It's probably a lot more time than they spend with God!
3. Everyone has something that they don't like about how they look. Maybe share something that you would like to change about your own physical appearance and let others in the group to do the same. Point out that everyone—even the most famous movie stars—think that their looks need a change. But it's our individual looks that make us unique and special.
4. 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. They are all human and God made us different. Without glossing over their concerns, remind them that they were created by a God who made them unique in their own way. And, while some people might have better looks, they are all loved the same by God.

5. Have the group summarize these two passages and ask for examples of how the verses fit into their lives. How does God want us to think of ourselves? Can they be happy with our looks when they always want to change them? How can one be content with her or her looks?

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 they 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 we spending time on our character—who we are and what we believe? Are we letting God work in our hearts and minds? How can we 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, and eating disorders. How do these change how people feel about themselves? Are these cures for a good self-esteem or not? What would God say about spending money and time on these things?
- Have the kids list three attributes that they like about themselves—are they outgoing? friendly? loving toward others? dedicated to their school-work? upbeat? Challenge them to pick one inner look that they want to improve and encourage them to set a goal for themselves. Have them write it down, put it in a self-addressed envelope, and send it to them later.