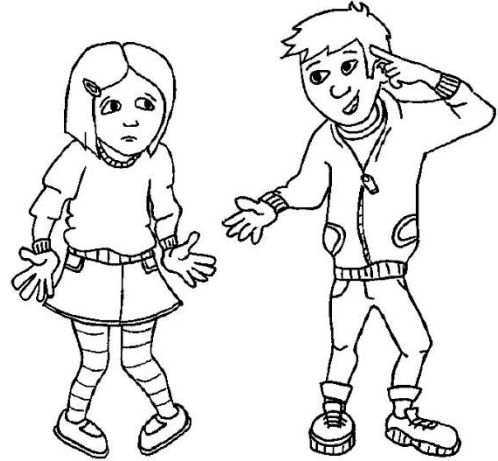


## TOPIC: Self-esteem and Feelings of Inferiority

Title: 'Fearfully and Wonderfully Made'

**Purpose of the meeting:** to encourage kids to not compare themselves to others but to understand how precious they are to God.



### INTRO

#### Small Groups Work

If the group is large, divide it into small groups of 3-4 people and ask them to discuss the following question: 'Which famous person would you like to be like and why?'

### QUESTIONS (for the whole group.)

To assist the leader, possible answers are provided after each question. The purpose of the discussion is for teens to express their thoughts. Discussion leaders should share their ideas only at the end.

1. What did the famous people you mentioned have that you don't have?  
(Write down their answers)  
*Money; musical or athletic talent; fans; a great job; success; popularity*
2. What happens when a person believes these advantages are important goals in life?  
(Show the answers to question #1)  
*They try hard to get them; they feel inferior, they envy others, they stop trying*
3. What is inferiority? How would you describe it?  
*The feeling that everyone else is better than you; that you are worthless; its bad self-esteem based on how you think others think about you, or how they treat you*
4. What are some of the ways in which people feel inferior?  
*Popularity/don't have friends (they feel unloved); academic success (they feel stupid); their looks (they feel ugly); sports (their other skills aren't important).*
5. What causes inferiority?  
*Comparison with others; society and social media create unrealistic expectations; parents' expectations; perfectionism (our own expectations).*

6. Is feeling inferior the same as humility? What's the difference?  
*Humility is putting others' interests before your own – centering your life more on others. Feelings of inferiority are focused more on ourselves and what people think of us.*
7. Are the things people feel inferior over changeable or unchangeable? Give examples. (See answers to question #1 and add more examples).

What are some things that are changeable?

*Attitudes, lifestyles, goals, abilities (some), effort and hard work*

What are some things that are unchangeable?

*Color of eyes, height, handicaps, IQ, natural talents, family's financial situation*

8. How can a person improve their own self-image?  
*Accept what they can't change; don't compare; set realistic expectations; realize you are loved by God and made in His image; enjoy the interests and talents and life you have; refuse to let social media define you or what you 'should' be.*
9. Feelings of inferiority is the number one problem among teens. How can we help others build their self-image?  
*Don't ridicule them; accept them as they are; look for good things and give them sincere compliments; don't constantly present 'perfect' images of ourselves on social media (keep it real).*
10. What gives a person worth?  
*Everyone is made in God's image; every person has value, just because they exist.*

## **WRAP-UP**

### **1. Feelings of inferiority are a serious problem for many people.**

According to one psychologist, 95% of people feel inferior. There are three areas of life in which people most often feel inferior:

#### **1. School/Intelligence**

Why compare grades? There is always someone better and worse. If you are always first in your school, there will be someone smarter than you are at university. Everyone feels stupid from time to time.

#### **2. Body Image (Beauty and Strength)**

Beauty, strength and athletic ability are glorified all around us.

The media is full of beautiful people. Advertisements feature flawless faces and perfect bodies (made even better by AI). Believe it or not, nobody is completely satisfied with their appearance.

### 3. Social Skills

Most people want to be witty, popular, and romantically attractive.

We compare ourselves to the people we see in commercials, movies, in social media, and even the most popular kids in our school (who are usually also worried about being popular). Everyone feels unloved/uninteresting from time to time.

Everyone believes that there are people who are smarter, more beautiful, and more popular than they are. So, what can YOU do when you suffer from feelings of inferiority?

#### **2. Don't compare with others!**

There will always be someone better or worse than us.

If we compare ourselves with those who are worse than us, we feel superior.

If we compare ourselves with those who are better than us, we feel inferior. Then we can get discouraged and give up, or stop doing things we care about.

If you want to monitor your progress, it's better to set your own realistic standards. It is also helpful to limit social media, where you are only seeing everybody's 'best self.'

#### **3. Set realistic goals for yourself**

There are things that cannot be changed: height, some physical characteristics, certain natural abilities. Ask God to help you accept yourself as you are.

But there are things that can be changed, such as your attitude, effort, lifestyle, physical strength, etc. In these areas, it is possible to set your own goals. For example:

School: complete assignments on time, ask for extra help when you need it, learn all you can from your teachers during class.

Social skills: focus on kindness; notice the kids who don't stand out, take some risks in reaching out and being a friend.

Physical development: eat, drink and sleep healthy, find ways to play sports you enjoy and set your own goals for improvement, etc.

Maybe you are a perfectionist, or maybe you feel undue pressure from your parents. Do everything to the best of your ability, be realistic about how much you can do, and *that's all you can do*.

#### **4. Remember that you are created in God's image, and you are precious to Him.**

The Bible says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27 NIV)

The image of God is within every person, which is why we have intrinsic value. Just think, even a sick or disabled person who can't get out of bed or do anything is precious.

Remember, feeling inferior is not the same as being humble. In humility, we think more about others than about ourselves *out of love for them*, not because we are worms. It's as wrong to devalue ourselves as it is to devalue someone else.

**5. Let's review our conclusions.**

1. Don't compare yourself to others.
2. Set realistic goals for yourself.
3. Remember that you are created in God's image and are precious to Him.