

Mirror, Mirror

Introduction

Often it is the simplest visual aid that can prompt the most useful bit of learning and help children engage with some of the big questions about the Christian faith. The following activity does just this with a mirror and aims to explore questions about what God is like; what God thinks of us; and how people might respond to God's love. The following outline uses the mirror quite literally for a time of reflection! There are connections with a number of short Bible passages, which explore the relationship of God to his creation.

Preparation

You will need a mirror about the size of a child's hand, preferably within a frame or soft casing so that it can be easily and safely passed around the class. Place the mirror inside an attractive box with a lid, which will be the initial focus for the activity.

Development

1. Introduce the attractive box, in which the mirror has been placed.

Build up interest in this box as containing something very special. Inside is something unique—the only one of its kind in the world. Hence it is rare and valuable and needs to be handled with care. Invite some suggestions as to what the class think it might be.

2. After a while, ask one child to come up and allow them to see inside the box at the unique thing that is there. Be rather secretive about this and perhaps even melodramatic! Take that child into your confidence about what is there and ask them to keep quiet for a while about the fact that he or she has simply seen a reflection of him or herself—something that is truly special and unique.

3. Once a number of children have been let in on the contents of the box, reveal it to everyone.

God has made each one of us unique and precious human beings. There is no one quite like you!

The Psalmist writes:

I am fearfully and wonderfully made Psalm 139:14a (NIV).

4. When we look into a mirror, we see an image of ourselves. I wonder what God sees, when God looks into a mirror? Invite some suggestions.

According to the first chapter of the Bible, God sees something that looks a little bit like all of us put together! A massive reflection of all the people of the world—including all people who have existed, people today and all the people to come!

God made you and me in God's own image Genesis 1:27 (paraphrased).

5. The trouble is that this massive image has become rather blurred and hazy. Not only because it's so big, but also because each part of the reflection has been spoiled by the way lives have got messed up. Because of this, God has an image problem!

6. But there is one clear, perfect reflection that God can see in the mirror. I wonder if you might guess what it looks like?

It is Jesus.

God sees Jesus.

(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God Colossians 1:15 (NIV).

God's Son has all the brightness of God's own glory and is like him in every way Hebrews 1:3a (CEV).

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like John 1:18 (CEV).

Christians believe that Jesus is the mirror image of God. Now we can know what people were originally like and what they are meant to be.

Christians believe that if we want to see God, then all we have to do is look at God's reflection, Jesus. However, even after three years, the disciples struggled to understand this.

Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need.' Jesus replied: 'Philip, I have been with you for a long time. Don't you know who I am? If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. How can you ask me to show you the Father?' John 14:8-9 (CEV).

7. So, here is another big question. If the best reflection God can see of God is Jesus, then what would Jesus see in the mirror, if he looked into one?

Well, as a human being like you and me, he would have seen his own human face, of course. But he also tried to teach his followers that a reflection of him might turn up anywhere!

He told them: *The way you behave towards anyone else - especially those who are in trouble or in great need - is how you are behaving to me* Matthew 25:40 (paraphrased).

Jesus' face is to be seen in everyone's face! When Jesus looks in the mirror, he sees all the people of the world looking back at him because in fact they reflect the image of God, which was God's idea in the first place.

This is why we are told to love other people—everyone, enemies included! —because Jesus sees himself in others. People can't say they love Jesus, if they don't love other people.

8. But how can our image be tidied up, so it might better reflect Jesus and God?

After Moses had been up on Mount Sinai close to God and talking with God, he was changed and glowed so much with God's brightness that he had to put a cover over his face so as not to blind the people he met!

See this story in Exodus 34:29-35.

Moses shone with reflected glory, mirroring the brightness of God.

Christians believe that the same thing can happen for them, because God comes close to all in Jesus and has given the Holy Spirit to repair their image, so they might begin better to reflect Jesus, who reflects God!

Paul writes about this in one of his letters:

So our faces are not covered. They show the bright glory of the Lord, as the Lord's Spirit makes us more and more like our glorious Lord 2 Corinthians 3:18.

9. So then, what do you see when you look in a mirror?

(Move the mirror so each can see herself or himself in it.)

Of course you see your face but also a lot more. This face also in part reflects God and Jesus, and God's Holy Spirit can be repairing it day by day so that it becomes a better reflection of God.

(Move the mirror again so that it catches the whole group for them all to see.)

And what do you see when you catch other people's reflection in your mirror?

You see part of the reflection of Jesus, who in turn is a reflection of God.

So each one of us is special...

and each person we meet is special, too.

10. In a time of quiet, pass the mirror around the group to remind everyone of what you have discovered together and then turn it into a short prayer:

Thank you, God, that you made each one of us special and unique.

Thank you, God, that you shared your reflection and made people part of your image in this world.

Thank you, God, that you reminded the world what your true reflection is like, when you sent Jesus.

Thank you, God, that each of us can catch a reflection of Jesus in every person we meet.

Help us, God, to love you by loving other people.

Help us, God, to let you repair your image in us.

Help us, God, to be on the lookout for your reflection wherever we go, so that your brightness will shine more and more in your world.

11. James in his letter uses the mirror idea, too. It is a fitting way to end this session! He says that the Bible is like a mirror—a place where we see ourselves, both as we are and how we can be. Then, very practically, James reminds us to be the sort of people who see what is reflected there and then do something about it!

Obey God's message! Don't fool yourselves by just listening to it. If you hear the

message and don't obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don't just hear and forget James 1:22-25 (CEV).

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