



Is My Self-Image Built on Sand? Plan



Note: The criteria by which we value ourselves is all-important to our self-image. Certain aspects of life have become inflated in terms of the value we place on them. For adults, these have been identified as Person Appearance, Performance, Possessions and Position/Popularity. They are similar for the young. Whilst these have a place in life that cannot be ignored, they are unreliable and comparatively superficial in contrast to our value as children of God, made in His Image. Everyone is of equal value in his eyes.

This session can be used as a stand-alone, or an introduction or follow-up to the one on **'Reflecting on Your Image'** which focuses on our value as God sees us. You may wish to allow more than one session on this so they have enough time to reflect on the message as there is so much pressure on them in this area. Personalize it as much as possible.

Aim

- To show that the belief system we use to value ourselves affects our self-image and needs to include some solid unchangeable things.

Bible verses

Matthew 7:26-27 – like a person who builds a house on sand

Psalms 118:8 - trust in God, not people

Isaiah 26:4 Trust in the Lord always for the Lord God is the eternal Rock.

Isaiah 49:16 ... I have written/engraved your name on the palms of my hands.

Psalms 40:2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair... out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

2 Samuel 22 – David's song about God as his rock

Resources

Choose the activities you want to use and make a list of relevant props.

'Self-Image Activity sheets': see web page. There are 4 versions within this resource. Choose one for your group or adapt the idea.

Other resources relating to this theme are available on the web page.

Starter options

Guess the Price Game (10 mins)

Need: Shopping items or pictures with a hidden list of their prices.

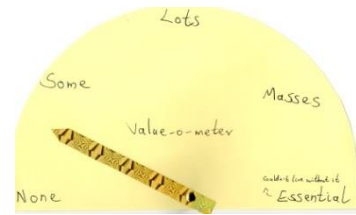
Divide the group into teams. Show one item at a time and give points to the team which makes the closest guess regarding the price. Vary the number of items depending on how much time you want to spend on the game.

- How do we decide what something is worth?
- How do we decide what someone is worth?
- How do you value yourself?

Game - 'What's it worth?'

Need: a wide variety of objects of various values.

Include some personal items such as photos or mobile phone
Make a value-o-meter with a dial pointing at none, some, lots, masses, essential/couldn't live without it. See scanned image.



Bring out the difference between the price of something and the value of something. For example I found a sea shell for this game – worth little to me but essential to life to the sea creature that used to live in it. What is worth more – a field of gold dust or a field of good quality soil?!

'You are Special': discussion starters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15QuHygLwFU> 8.21

<https://www.slideshare.net/lynnard18/you-are-special-15275361>

Read the all-age story by Max Lucado called 'You are Special', about the little wooden people who gave each other dots and stars.

- When was the last time you felt special and why?
- What do people give you stars and dots for?
- What do you give yourself stars and dots for?
- Why did Lucia not accept the stars?

Main Activity: Discuss:

There is much discussion potential in this section. Have some fun props to back it up and spend time exploring it according to their need. There is a selection of activity sheets as back-up to this discussion.

How do you rate yourself?

How do you value yourself? What makes you feel valued?

Personal appearance

When you wake up in the morning, what do you think when you look in the mirror?

Do you value yourself by what you look like?

How attractive you think you are – whether you are wearing the 'right' clothes.

Does personal appearance matter? When and how?

Props: some make-up; some in and/or out-of-date fashion

Abilities

You get into school

How do you rate yourself here? By your grades, your skill at football...?

What makes you different from your classmates?

Perhaps you are good at something out of school.

Props: a trophy, certificate of achievement, etc

Popularity/status



At break / after school

Do you rate yourself by how many friends you have, your popularity or leadership ability?

Prop: Mobile phone open on Facebook page

Possessions



You chat about what you bought at the week-end –

Do you rate yourself by what you own, your possessions, the latest game etc?

Props: select as appropriate for the group

Discuss

- Are these things in themselves right, wrong or neutral?
- Can each of these things change?
- What happens if they change and we have based our personal value on them?

Chocolate gold coins

Is your value like chocolate money? When the heat goes up – does it melt away?

Reflections and Application

Sandcastle activity

Use some kind of modelling agent that collapses easily like sand, flour, mud, playdough

Write on the golden flags the things on which you often base your value but which don't last.

Make the sandcastle/s and place the flags in it/them.

Discuss what will happen the tide comes in or when it rains.

This activity could also be used as an act of worship. Allow prayer space for them to surrender these things to God if they wish. Allow free choice over this and don't make it a whole group thing.

On what unchangeable things can we base our value?

What does God say? Why does God value us so highly?

Look at some of the Bible verses and ask them to write their favourite on a gold card.

Song: Before the throne of God I stand (C. L. Bancroft)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoPyLcY6Zv4>

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Image: sand castle collapsing by the tide on the coast of Brittany © autobus - Fotolia.com