

## On your marks

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 our 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 me; and how I can respond to God's love. It could be used as an interactive talk as part of worship, a focus for a short epilogue with a midweek group or as a way into a time of prayer with your children's church. This piece connects with a number of short Bible passages, which explore the relationship of the Trinity to God's creation.

## Get set

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

## Go!

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 children 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 139:14.
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 that have existed, people today and all the people to come!

*God made you and me in God's own image* Genesis 1:27.

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 in some way been spoiled by the way each of us has messed up our lives and not lived up to God's original image. Because of



us, 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.

*Jesus reflects the glory of God and bears the true likeness of his character* Hebrews 1:3.

*No one has seen God... Jesus, God's own Son, has made God visible to us* John 1:18.

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

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 to Jesus, 'Show us Father God'. Jesus said, 'Have I been with you so long and you still don't know me, Philip? Anyone who has seen me, has seen Father God'* John 14:8-9.

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. We can't say we love Jesus, if we don't love other people.

8. But how can our image be tidied up, so we can 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! You can read the story for yourself in Exodus 34:29-35 Moses shone with reflected glory, mirroring the brightness of God.

The same thing can happen for us, because God comes close to us in Jesus and has given us the Holy Spirit to repair our image, so we might begin better to reflect Jesus, who reflects God!

Paul writes about this in one of his letters:

*We all with uncovered faces reflect the glory of God and are being changed to look like God, little by little. This is the work of the Holy Spirit* 2 Corinthians 3:18.

*God planned from the very beginning that each one of us should end up reflecting Jesus* Romans 8:29.

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



(move the mirror so each can see her - 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 the Holy Spirit is repairing it day by day so that you can become 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 prayer, pass the mirror around the group to remind everyone of what you have discovered together and then turn it into petition and praise.

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

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

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

**Thank you, God, that we 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!

*Be doers of the word not just hearers... if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone who sees his face in a mirror and then goes away and instantly forgets what he looked like! But anyone who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and keeps going, is someone who sees and reflects what is there. That person will be blessed by God James 1:22-25.*