

# youthESource Bible Study

## MADE...in His Image

by Emily Beckwith

This three-part Bible study considers what it means to be made in God's image. Using Mary Shelley's story of *Frankenstein*, students will consider how God created mankind, how we have fallen, and how God redeems us through His Son.

Topics: God's Image, Self Esteem

### Part One: Making the Monster

#### *Grey's Anatomy (The Map)*

- Students will **know** that they are perfectly made by a loving Father.
- Students will **feel** loved by their omniscient Father.
- Students will **(do)** spread the knowledge they learn with others who need to hear it.

#### *Organs (Supplies)*

Plain white sheets of paper

Colored pencils

Pencils

(Optional) Pictures of different animals

#### *The Lightning Rod*

Tell students to think of two or three favorite animals. Then tell them to take two or three animals and combine them into one animal. Ask them to draw their animals.

- What does it look like?
- What qualities does it inherit from each animal?
- What is its name?
- What are its habits, foods, habitats, etc.?

#### *The Shock*

Another group of people ventured down this same path.

A rainy day brought a famous trio inside on a summer in 1816. Shaking off the water and lighting a fire, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron tumbled down into the living room with high hopes for an evening of storytelling. Byron grabbed his favorite book of ghost stories and Percy held his young wife close as they listened to the terrors of the scary stories. After exhausting the storytelling the three fell easily into creepy conversations about reanimating flesh and creating life.

As the night wore on, the deeper the conversation became. Towards the end of their conversation the three of them made a deal to write horror stories to terrorize each other. Mary Shelley later wrote, "I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world."<sup>1</sup> And, thus, Frankenstein and his monster were born.

#### *Sometimes, we feel like Frankenstein's monster:*

Look at the two discussion topics. Pick one to answer aloud.

1. Tell about a time when you felt really ugly on the outside.
2. Tell about a time when you felt really ugly on the inside.

<sup>1</sup>Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein, Or Modern Prometheus*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1992. (Page 5)

## The Guts

Read Psalm 139:13-16:

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

1. What does the Psalmist mean when he says, "you created my inmost being"?
2. What does it mean to be "fearfully and wonderfully made"?
3. The Psalmist says that God saw him being formed—saw him in the secret place. What goes through your mind when you hear that God personally knit you together and formed your body?
4. How do you feel about God forming your body?
5. How does this knowledge change the way that you look at your internal and external appearances?

**Conclusion:** God tells us that we are not monsters. Instead, we are His unique and awesome creations. God wants us to know that He created us PERFECTLY! He created us just as He wants us to be. You are made in His perfect image. (Read Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.'")

## Monster Unleashed

Take it to the streets! Tell students to ask people in your congregation what they dislike about the way they look or what is one of the worst parts of their personality. After they answer, read Psalms 139:13-16. Then ask them to look at their flaws while keeping that verse in mind.

## Part Two: Monster in the Mirror

### Grey's Anatomy (The Map)

- Students will **know** that Jesus stands in the gap between mankind and God to plead for our salvation.
- Students will **feel** convicted by their actions and relieved by God's grace.
- Students will **(do)** make a mirror with a picture of Jesus in the center, in order to remember how God looks through Jesus to see us.

### Organs (Supplies)

- Small hand mirrors (enough for each person)
- Modeling clay (enough for each person)
- Small pictures of Jesus for each mirror

### The Lightning Rod

Begin by telling the students to think about the following question: Do you care what people think of you? Hand out a mirror and some modeling clay to each student. Instruct them to split their clay in half. Instruct the students to look in the mirrors and mold the clay to look like their faces. After they've finished, then instruct the students to put their image aside and then partner them up with someone they don't typically spend time with. Now instruct them to mold their partners' faces with their modeling clay.

Now ask:

- How did you do reconstructing the image of your face?
- Why did you do well/poorly?
- How did your partner do reconstructing the image of your face?
- Which was harder: constructing your face or someone else's? Why or why not?

### The Shock

While he was creating his monster, Frankenstein became so obsessed with his project that he lost contact with his friends, his family and even his beloved Elizabeth. He became completely engrossed in his project to the point that he never stopped to think what the end result would look like.

After he finished his project, he looked down and didn't see a work of art, as he had imagined. Instead, he saw a monster. Frankenstein cast his monster out of his house—denying him love, care, knowledge, and even a name.

Frankenstein's monster left a poorly reproduced image of his Father.

*Sometimes, we feel like Frankenstein's monster:*

Look at the two discussion topics. Pick one to answer aloud.

1. Tell about a time when you felt rejected by a friend.
2. Tell about a time you rejected someone.

*The Guts*

Ask: Is it important to have a good reputation? Why or why not?

Read 1 Timothy 3:7:

*He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.*

1. What do these verses tell us about reputation?
2. Why does a bad reputation cause you to fall into "disgrace" and "the devil's trap"?
3. Think about this question again: Do you care what people think of you?

God wants us to have a good reputation. Why? Does He want us to be popular and self-conscious? Not necessarily. God wants us to know that the way we look at others affects the way that others look at God. We mirror our creator.

That's a lot of pressure. Know that it is only half of the story. Read Romans 8:1-3:

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.*

1. What is the "law of the Spirit of life"?
2. What is the "law of sin and death"?
3. What does it mean for the Spirit of life to win over sin and death?
4. How is there, then, no condemnation for us who believe in Christ Jesus?
5. What does it mean to you that Jesus was a sin offering for YOU?

Ask three students to volunteer. One should be God, one Jesus, and one You. Have God and You stand several feet apart. Instruct them to look at each other. Explain that if You sins, God sees it. God sees You completely sinful. Then ask Jesus to stand in between You and God. Explain that now when You sin, Jesus who is also God can see the sin. However, when God looks towards You, instead of seeing You's sin, God sees Jesus' perfect life, death and His salvation bought for us.

*Conclusion:* When Frankenstein looked at his imperfect monster, he cast him out of his presence and denied him love. When our Father saw our imperfections, he sent His one and only son to die to save us from our sin, give us freedom, and bless us for all eternity. When God holds the mirror up to our faces, He sees Jesus. We are blessed to have such a loving Father.

*Monster Unleashed*

Take the mirrors you used in the beginning and have students paste a picture of Jesus to the middle of the mirror. Ask them to take their mirror home and put it up where they can see it to remind them of the image that really matters.

## Part Three: The Monster's Journey

*Grey's Anatomy (The Map)*

- Students will **know** that while we are monsters, God shows us that he loves us more than anything we could ever do.
- Students will **feel** elated that Jesus Christ took on our journey in order to save us from our own image.
- Students will **(do)** plant seeds in a pot to watch them grow and nurture that growth in an effort to remember the creator/created relationship.

### Organs (Supplies)

- A couple rusty and battered pots
- A shiny, clean, new pot
- Some old seeds, dry, out of the bag and broken
- A packet of new, beautiful flower seeds.
- A container of clay or dry soil from outside
- A container of fertilized soil
- Water
- 2 Liter bottle of soda
- (Optional) Worms or other beneficial additives

### The Lightning Rod

Set up a couple of choices for the class. Put out a couple old battered pots and a nice shiny new pot. Put out the old seeds and the new seed packets. Put out the two kinds of soil. Put out the water and the soda. Put out any other materials you purchased for the event.

Instruct the students that you are going to plant some flowers today. Ask them to go through all the different options and pick out what they'd like to use for their flowers. After they've planted their flowers, and hopefully chosen to pour water on them and not soda, ask them:

- Why did you pick the particular items you picked?
- What thoughts went into your choices?
- Did you want the best things for your seeds? Why or why not?

### The Shock

Frankenstein's monster had a hard time understanding why his creator abandoned and abhorred him. He understood once he saw his reflection. After seeing himself, he was horrified by his appearance. And his father agreed with him.

The monster went on his life journey knowing he was a monster, continually being run out of villages and homes, and always feeling utter rejection from all mankind. His journey was constant rejection and he never received the retribution or love he craved. Eventually the monster accepts his monstrous fate and lives up to his abominable stigma. He becomes what he first saw in his father's eyes.

### Sometimes, we feel like Frankenstein's monster:

Look at the two discussion topics. Pick one to answer aloud.

1. Tell about a time when you felt completely alone.
2. Tell about a time that you gave into a self-fulfilling prophecy—when you let your thoughts or someone else's about you determine how you acted.

### The Guts

Read the following two verses:

Romans 5:12-14:

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.*

Psalms 51:3-5:

*For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

1. What do these verses tell you about who you are?
2. How does it feel to be called a sinner?
3. Do you believe that you truly are a sinner? Why or why not?
4. What kind of image do these verses cast of you?

Now read Romans 3:23

*For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

All of these verses clearly state that we are sinners, that sin is bad, and that no human is exempt from sin. Basically the Bible tells us that the law reflects clearly that we are monsters. We are MONSTERS! But read on!

Romans 8:31-33; 37-39:

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1. What do these verses tell you about your monstrous fate?
2. Why do you escape the horror of death and the devil?
3. What feelings go through your heart and mind when you read verses 38-39?
4. Just to clarify: what can separate you from the love of Christ?
5. How is your journey different from the monster's journey?

*Conclusion:* Frankenstein, when he saw his creation, was disgusted by the fact that he was a monster. Our Father, when He saw us, knew what we would do, knew that though we were made in His image, we were truly monsters. Still, He loves His monsters because they are His. He loves His monsters so much that He gave up His son for them. Being made in His image means being loved for the image we are—a child of God—not for what we do. When we look in our Father's eyes, we don't see horror from looking at a monster, we see His awesome love for us and it gives us courage for our journey.

#### *Monster Unleashed*

Water your plant every week. Make it a class project. Measure its growth and prosperity. Keep up with it and make it a remembrance of the way God cares for us.

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