

The Gift of Our Bodies

PRO TIP
Download other grades for alternate activities!

CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 1146–1152, 1210

MATERIALS

- ▶ [Praying with the Body](#) worksheet
- ▶ 15–20 slips of paper with names of foods, animals, or household objects written on them
- ▶ Marker and dry-erase board, and/or whiteboard
- ▶ Timer

CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY STANDARDS

5.4.1 TOB Explain how original nakedness refers to seeing the world and others as God sees; as Gift. (TOB 13, 14:2; CCC 337, 339, 377, 2531)

5.9.1 TOB Recognize that Jesus reveals the love of the Father. (TOB 23:4, 67:5; CCC 606–607; 1823)

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

Teacher Background

God understands who we are and what we need, and He knows that we experience the world in and through our body. God designed us to have bodies and use them to participate in all the true, good, and beautiful created things this life has to offer. The Incarnation shows us in a very special way how highly God regards His material creation. Jesus will forever have a human body! If God, the creator of the universe and the human body did not think the body was good, then why would He choose to have one for all eternity?



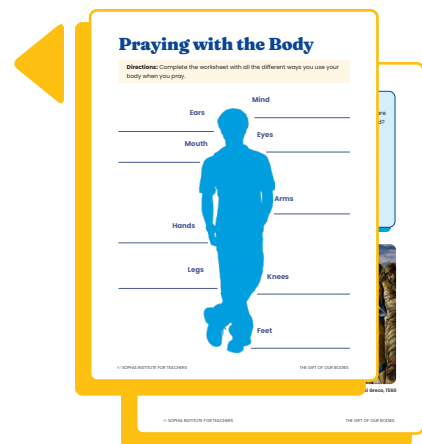
HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

Gender ideology views the body as an amazing machine that is ours to do with as we wish. But the truth is that our bodies are precious gifts from God. Seeing the way God Himself took on a human body should help us to see the material world, including our bodies, as God sees them. The term from Theology of the Body “original nakedness” refers to seeing the world and others as God sees; as a gift.

Activity

Note: Before class, prepare 15-20 slips of paper with names of foods, animals, or household objects written on them.

- If possible, begin this activity right after you have prayed to open your class.
- Ask if anyone can list some ways we just used our bodies to pray. Explain that we use our bodies to pray all the time, and our bodies are important for every way we grow closer to God.
- Distribute [Praying with the Body](#) worksheets and have students complete the activity to help them think about how they use different parts of their body to pray.
- After a few moments, go over responses as a class. Then ask the class if they can think of any examples from the Bible when Jesus used His body to pray, or to show love to other people. *List as many as you can, writing them on the board.*



- E. If students do not mention them, be sure to include on the list the moment of the Incarnation when God the Son assumed a human nature in Mary's womb, the moment of His birth, the ways He touched people to heal them, prayed with His vocal cords, mouth, and hands, and of course how He gave up His life on the Cross, making an offering of His body.
- F. Ask your students to reflect quietly for a moment about what these facts mean about our bodies. Then explain in a mini-lecture:

These facts show us that our bodies are good! In fact, the most important way we know our bodies are good is that God Himself assumed a human nature. The second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, took on a human body! God is all-loving and all-good. If the body were not good, then God would not take on a body. The goodness of the human body is affirmed in the Incarnation.

Then throughout His public ministry, Jesus performed many miracles that all point to

the goodness of the body. He healed people from diseases, and fed many through the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. His words at the Last Supper are made present to us at every Holy Mass when Jesus offers us His very Body and Blood in the Eucharist, with the words, "This is My Body." Most significantly, Jesus used His body to suffer and die for us, in order to bring about our redemption.

In this greatest act of love, Jesus gives His whole self as a gift to the world. Knowing all these truths helps us see the world, other people, our own selves and especially our own bodies as the good, beautiful, gifts that they are.

Note: Depending on the maturity of your students, you may wish to add that the term the Church uses for seeing the world and other people as God sees them is "original nakedness." This term refers to when Adam and Eve were in the garden, before the fall, when they were able to see each other and all of creation as a beautiful gift.

- G. Have students list on the back of the worksheet what they think are the most important ways the life of Jesus teaches us that our bodies are good.
- H. To wrap up, divide the class into teams of 4-5 and explain that you will be playing four rounds of a game called "Guess It." In this game, one person from each team will receive a card with something written on it. Their goal is to get their team members to say what is written on their card before the timer runs out. This game will help us all see how important our bodies are to us.

There are different rules for each of the four rounds. **IMPORTANT:** Do not reveal the rules to students ahead of time. Wait until you come to each round in the game.

- For Round 1, students will be allowed to use their mouths, lungs, and vocal cords (in other words, they can speak). They can use any words or sounds they want, except

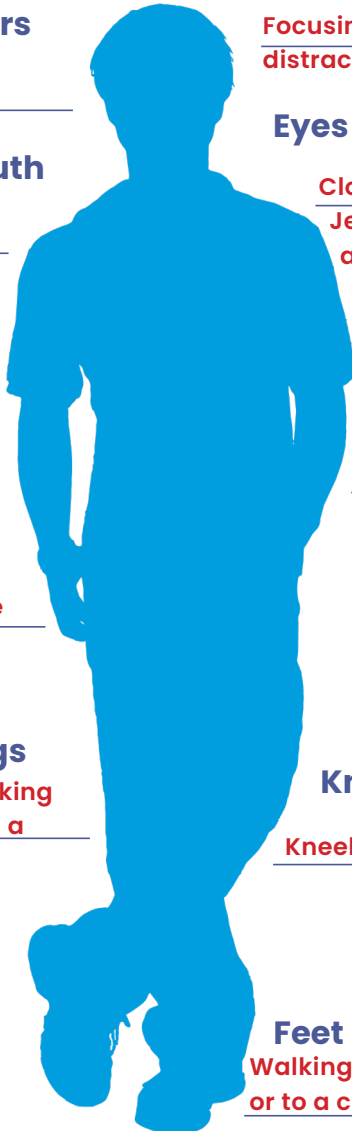
they may NOT use the word itself. They can spell it out or say words it rhymes with. Allow 20 seconds to guess the word. Give a few students from each team the chance to play this round.

- For Round 2, students will be allowed to use their hands, a marker, and the whiteboard/ blackboard/smart board to describe the object. They cannot make any noise, write words, or gesture with their bodies when trying to describe the object. Allow 30 seconds to guess the word. Give a few students from each team the chance to play this round.
- For Round 3, students will be allowed to act out the object using their bodies, but without making any sounds or writing anything down. Allow 30 seconds to guess the word. Give a few students from each team the chance to play this round.
- For Round 4, students must get their team to guess the word without using their bodies at all. They cannot talk, write, or move any part of their bodies. After a few minutes of students trying to figure out how to complete this round, call one student up to the front and have him or her demonstrate. He or she will obviously not be able to do anything.

- I. Allow a few moments of levity after Round 4 before making the serious point that we cannot do anything if we cannot use our bodies. Each round showed us a different way we can do amazing things with our bodies, and indeed that our bodies are ourselves. We are our bodies!
- J. Discuss briefly how we know our bodies are good, recalling key points from the mini-lecture. Then, finally, pray together as a class thanking God for the gift of your bodies.

Praying with the Body

Directions: Complete the worksheet with all the different ways you use your body when you pray.



Ears
Listening to the silence, or to sacred music.

Mind
Focusing on God, trying not to be distracted.

Mouth
Speaking in vocal prayer, kissing the Bible.

Eyes
Closing our eyes to imagine Jesus, looking at icons, sacred art, or the Eucharist in a monstrance, reading Scripture.

Arms
Folding our arms, or raising our hands.

Hands
Folding our hands in prayer, turning the pages of the Bible or a prayer book.

Legs
Kneeling or genuflecting, walking to a place of prayer, going on a pilgrimage.

Knees
Kneeling, genuflecting.

Feet
Walking to a home prayer space, or to a church or chapel.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

Reflection Question

Recall your class discussion about the Incarnation. What do you think are the most important ways we learn from Jesus that our bodies are good?

Accept reasoned answers that draw from the day's learning.



Christ Healing the Blind Man, El Greco, 1560

The Gift of Our Bodies

Praying with the Body

Directions: Complete the worksheet with all the different ways you use your body when you pray.

Mind _____

Ears _____

Mouth _____

Eyes _____

Arms _____

Hands _____

Legs _____

Knees _____

Feet _____

Reflection Question

Recall your class discussion about the Incarnation. What do you think are the most important ways we learn from Jesus that our bodies are good?



Christ Healing the Blind Man, El Greco, 1560

God Loves His Creation

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CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 214, 221

MATERIALS

- ▶ Bibles
- ▶ [Creation in Greek Mythology](#)
- ▶ [Genesis 2 Reading Guide](#)
- ▶ [Greek Myth and Catholic Teaching T-Chart](#)

CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY STANDARDS

5.1.1 TOB Compare and contrast ancient myths of creation to Sacred Scripture and God's goodness in creating. (cf. TOB 13:2-4; CCC 285, 287-301)

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

Teacher Background

The humans of Greek myth were cursed when Zeus split men and women into separate bodies. This conception of the mutual longing as a curse contrasts with Catholic teaching that love between man and woman was part of the original blessing of Creation. The truth is that man and woman were created for each other, to love each other. Marriage is an icon of the Trinity's self-giving love: the husband gives himself fully to his wife; the wife gives herself fully to her husband; the communion between them creates life. Love is a blessing and a share in the Lord's divine life, and not a curse.



HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

Gender ideology holds that we self-create our sexual identity. But the truth is that being male or female is a reality and not a feeling, no matter how that feeling may be sincerely experienced. Our sexual identity is a gift from God.

Activity

- Begin by asking if anyone in the class is familiar with the creation story of the ancient Greeks. *Allow students to share what they know.*
- Distribute [Creation in Greek Mythology](#). Give students time to review the summary of the creation story at the top and skim over the questions individually.
- Have students do a think, pair, share with questions 1-3. Give them time to finish their drawings, and then to respond to the reflection question.
- Help students understand that the Greek myth is based on the idea that humans were cursed with the need to wander the earth searching for their lost half.
- Then ask students to follow along in their Bibles as you read aloud Genesis 2:18-25. Then have them complete [Genesis 2 Reading Guide](#) with a partner.
- Go over the responses as a large group, helping students recognize the truth that the love between man and woman is not a curse, as the ancient Greeks thought, but rather a gift from God. God created us in His image, with intellect, free will. Free will gives us the capacity to love, that is, to give of ourselves for the good of another.

Creation in Greek Mythology

Directions: Read the selection and then answer the questions that follow.

According to Ancient Greek mythology, the first humans were made very differently from humans today. According to Greek myth, the first people were both male and female. These mythical beings were two persons in one body: complete with two heads, four arms and four legs! When they rebelled against the king of the gods, Zeus, he punished them by splitting them apart down the middle. The result was that men and women were now separated from their one flesh member of the human race who was destined to wander the earth searching for his or her "other half".

1. According to Greek myth, what did the first humans look like?

2. According to Greek myth, why do people no longer look that way?

3. What is the most interesting part of this story to you?

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Genesis 2 Reading Guide

Directions: Answer the questions based on your reading of Genesis 2:18-25.

1. Read verse 18. In all of His creation, what was the only thing God saw that was not good?

2. Why were the animals "not suited" to be helpers for Adam?

3. Read verse 21. How did God form Eve?

4. How does Adam feel when he sees Eve? How do you know?

5. Is the communion between man and woman a curse in this story, or is it a blessing of creation?

6. What does this story tell us about who God is?

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- G. Have a student stand and read aloud verse 24: “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.”
- H. Explain that here the sacred author teaches about marriage, which Jesus elevated to a Sacrament during His ministry. Man and woman were created for each other, to love each other. Marriage is an icon of the Trinity’s self-giving love: the husband gives himself fully to his wife; the wife gives herself fully to her husband; the communion between them creates life. Love is a blessing and a share in the Lord’s divine life, and not a curse.
- I. Finally, ask students to compare and contrast the Greek myth of half-humans searching for their “other half” with the reuniting of man and woman into one body in marriage as revealed in Genesis, and analyze the differences on [Greek Myth and Catholic Teaching T-Chart](#).

Greek Myth and Catholic Teaching T-Chart

Directions: Complete the T-chart by sorting the phrases from the bank below into two columns.

Greek Myth	Catholic Teaching

Phrase Bank

- The ability to love is a gift.
- The feeling of love is a curse.
- There is a single person each human must search for and be reunited with.
- We can choose to make a gift of ourselves for the good of another person.
- Love is an act of free will.
- Humans are not whole unless they are with their “other half.”
- Each person has equal dignity.
- Love between man and woman is a blessing of creation.
- “Love” between man and woman was the result of a punishment.

PHRASE BANK FOR TEACHERS GOD LOVES HIS CREATION

Creation in Greek Mythology

Directions: Read the selection and then answer the questions that follow.

According to Ancient Greek mythology, the first humans were made very differently from humans today. According to Greek myth, the first people were both male and female. These mythical beings were two persons in one body: complete with two heads, four arms and four legs! When they rebelled against the king of the gods, Zeus, he punished them by splitting them apart down the middle. The result was that man and woman were now separated. From then on, each member of the human race was destined to wander the earth, searching for his or her "other half."



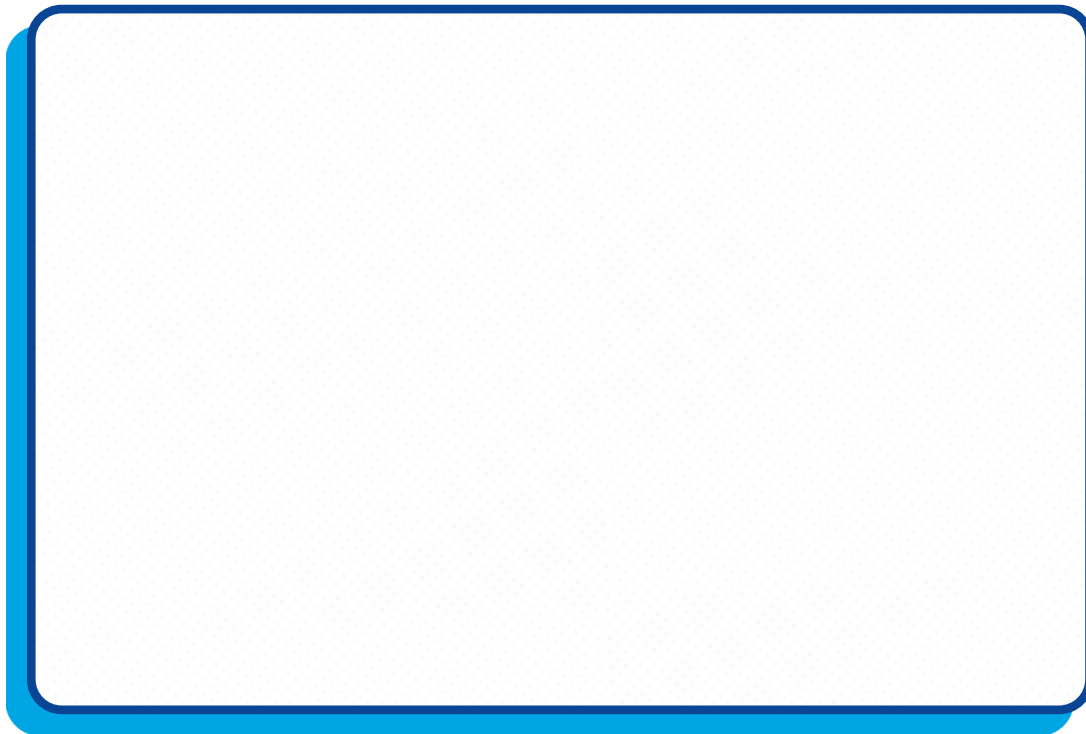
- 1** According to Greek myth, what did the first humans look like?
Two persons in one body

- 2** According to Greek myth, why do people no longer look that way?
Zeus split them in two.

- 3** What is the most interesting part of this story to you?
Accept reasoned answers.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

- 4 Draw a picture in the space below about what these first mythical people might have looked like.



Reflection Question

According to Greek myth, was the search for communion between a man and a woman a gift or a curse? Explain.

It was a curse. The separation of men and women was punishment for rebellion.

Genesis 2 Reading Guide

Directions: Answer the questions based on your reading of Genesis 2:18-25.

- 1 Read verse 18. In all of His creation, what was the only thing God saw that was not good?
That man was alone
- 2 Why were the animals “not suited” to be helpers for Adam?
They were not like Adam. Adam, created in the image and likeness of God, was fundamentally different from the animals.
- 3 Read verse 21. How did God form Eve?
He put Adam into a deep sleep and took a rib from Adam to form Eve: “the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman” (Genesis 2:21-22).
- 4 How does Adam feel when he sees Eve? How do you know?
Students may say Adam feels happy, relieved, satisfied, and so forth. His words “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” show us how he feels.
- 5 Is the communion between man and woman a curse in this story, or is it a blessing of creation?
A blessing of creation
- 6 What does this story tell us about who God is?
God is love. He created man and woman for each other, to love each other.

Greek Myth and Catholic Teaching T-Chart

Directions: Complete the T-chart by sorting the phrases from the bank below into two columns.

Greek Myth	Catholic Teaching
<p>The feeling of love is a curse.</p> <p>There is a single person each human must search for and be united with.</p> <p>Humans are not “whole” unless they are with their “other half.”</p> <p>“Love” between man and woman was the result of punishment.</p>	<p>The ability to love is a gift.</p> <p>We can choose to make a gift of ourselves for the good of another person.</p> <p>Love is an act of free will.</p> <p>Each person has equal dignity.</p> <p>Love between man and woman is a blessing of creation.</p>

Phrase Bank

- ▶ The ability to love is a gift.
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God Loves His Creation

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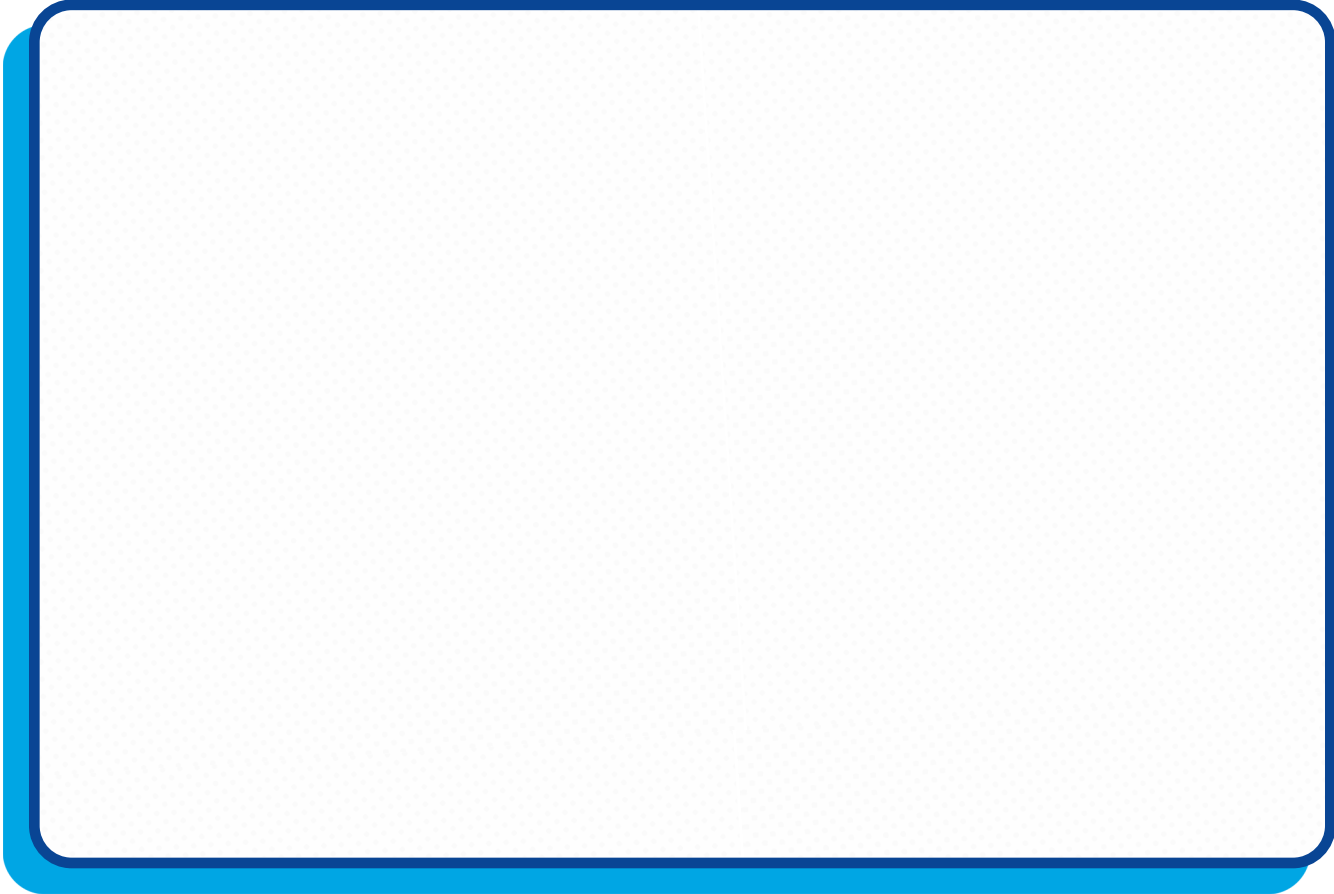
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3 What is the most interesting part of this story to you?

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Draw a picture in the space below about what these first mythical people might have looked like.



Reflection Question

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