

## ***These Are Our Bodies* for Preschool and Elementary Children**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

*What if a parent enters the program at the Intermediate level? Did they miss important information from the Preschool and Primary sessions?*

It is possible to enter *These Are Our Bodies* at any stage of life. Encourage parents and leaders to read the *Foundation Book*, no matter when they begin the program; you may wish to recommend certain pages or chapters to read in advance of a session. These suggestions are noted in the Session plans. The *Foundation Book* helps provide the parents with information they may have missed as a result of starting when their children are older. Consider offering earlier parent sessions to parents who express an interest in previous content.

*Are the age recommendations “hard and fast” or flexible?*

While the Preschool and Primary age sessions are flexible, children not yet in the fifth grade (approximately 10 to 11 years old) should wait to enter the Intermediate level. Developmental milestones go beyond first words, toilet training, and riding a bike independently. Just as toilet training is a significant step, beginning puberty is a less concrete but no less significant stage in a child’s life. Bodies grow and develop at differing paces. The suggestion of the authors is to allow parents some flexibility with the Preschool and Primary content, which folds similar ideas and themes into the sessions, but invite parents to wait until their child turns 10 or 11 to begin the Intermediate level.

*What if we have only a few interested families?*

Consider joining with other churches, even other denominations, to find a critical mass of individuals. Advertise to other local agencies and community centers. Offer to tailor the time and location to make it possible for the group to draw more individuals in.

*Should we adhere to an attendance policy?*

Parents lead busy lives. It will be tempting to let attendance fluctuate in the group. In the experience of the authors, developing a level of trust and vulnerability requires commitment. If a parent does not feel they can attend the majority of the sessions, invite them to join in the next time it is offered, or engage with them in a discussion about how to remove barriers to their participation. Is it the need for childcare? Is the time or location a challenge? Do they need assistance with transportation? Overcome their hurdles with them, and don’t be afraid to ask how to help.

*Should people register in advance?*

In order to have enough materials, adequate space, and other suggestions, we recommend that you ask people to register in advance. If you want to drum up interest but not yet ask people to register, hold a listening and sharing session about what the program will offer. Serve refreshments, keep the atmosphere welcoming, and invite people to register at the end.

*What if a parent feels they must bring their child to the parent-only sessions?*

Parent-only sessions are just that—for parents. Although, the presence of very young children is welcome and expected in the joint sessions, we recommend asking parents to make other arrangements for other children during the parent only sessions. Just as having only a parent at the joint sessions would feel strange to the group, having a very young child in the midst of a vulnerable discussion changes the climate of the session. If you are able, offer childcare for those parents who attend. You may have to charge a small fee or ask for donations to cover the cost, but it is money well spent. It also alleviates the need for parents to worry about finding childcare on their own. Offering the parent sessions during Sunday school supports families with young children by eliminating the need for childcare at home.

*What if we run out of time but have more to discuss?*

Honoring the start and ending time as advertised is important, especially for young families. Consider the “in-between” times just a valuable an opportunity as the sessions themselves. Online forums and social media are great to help people engage outside of the sessions with the content they just learned. Group members can continue to have dialogue with one another outside of the sessions and share about those moments when the group reconvenes.

Ending a session with high energy is also positive in that parents will leave with ideas and questions to ponder. To honor those questions and topics that the session was not able to address, make a “Parking Lot” on easel paper. Parents can write on the “Parking Lot” questions they have or topics that they want to revisit. Or give parents sticky notes so that they can jot down their thoughts and ideas during the session.