



## ***5th Grade Developmental Guide***

**Fifth graders still want your encouragement, but they will rarely ask for it. This is the year that teasing and gossiping take center stage, and with your child's desire to "fit in," it can lead to a compromise of values. These big shifts make it even more important for you to help your child see how they are designed differently, on purpose.**

**Here are some of the developmental changes they are experiencing right now.**

### **Physical**

- Are maturing physically (Girls are typically ahead of boys in physical maturity. Girls may begin their period.)
- Need outdoor time and need to be challenged physically
- Benefit from snacks and rest periods, due to their rapidly growing/changing bodies
- May require reminders about good hygiene, using deodorant, brushing teeth, etc.

### **Emotional**

- Are capable of developing their own goals
- Are generally balanced
- May shrug off responsibility
- Might still be unable to manage time well; need scheduling
- May stress over academic challenges
- Are beginning to accept responsibility for their own failures and mistakes (Though it may not be articulated, they are beginning to recognize their part in mistakes.)

### **Relational**

- Can independently resolve conflict and help others solve conflict
- Use humor that may not be funny to adults
- Are very talkative
- Enjoy family and peers
- Often need to talk to think

### **Spiritual**

- Are better able to see others' perspectives; have more of a global view, which facilitates empathy
- Test levels of independence (This may be greater for boys than girls.)
- Become dependable and trustworthy (great characteristics for friends and family!)
- Will need help figuring out the balance of social time, school time, family time, hobby time, etc.
- Are sensitive to and able to resolve issues of fairness



### ***Invitation to Identity***

**The emotions of a 5th grader can run the gamut. They're at the top of the stack at elementary schools, but there's also a good deal of fear about the middle school years just ahead. With all that uncertainty comes the moment when 5th graders begin to ask themselves, "Who am I, and where do I fit in?" This is a conversation that will continue to be played in their minds well into their teen years. We want to help you set them up to know fully WHO THEY ARE as they face this ongoing question.**

### **Kickstarter 1: Made with Purpose**

Read together **Psalm 139:13-18:**

*You created the deepest parts of my being.*

*You put me together inside my mother's body.*

*How you made me is amazing and wonderful.*

*I praise you for that.*

*What you have done is wonderful.  
I know that very well.*

*None of my bones was hidden from you  
when you made me inside my mother's*

*body.*

*That place was as dark as the deepest  
parts of the earth.*

*When you were putting me together  
there, your eyes saw my body even before  
it was formed.*

*You planned how many days I would live.  
You wrote down the number of them in  
your book before I had lived through even  
one of them.*

*God, your thoughts about me are  
priceless.*

*No one can possibly add them all up.  
If I could count them, they would be more  
than the grains of sand.*

*If I were to fall asleep counting and then  
wake up, you would still be there with me.*

These are God's thoughts about you.  
Use the boy/girl graphic and write  
within it how you would describe  
yourself, what you are good at, what  
you like doing, what kind of person you  
are.

Pray with your child that he/she would  
see himself/herself as God sees him/  
her.

Give your 5th grader space to do this  
alone. Depending on the privacy level  
of your child, he/she may not want you



to see it, may not want you to look at it in front of them, may share openly, etc. You can ask them to leave it on their dresser, and you can look at it during a time that he/she isn't around. They could lay it on the kitchen counter, or they may want to just put it in a safe place. It'd be great for you to know what it contains, but it's more important that the child is honest and does it.

## Kickstarter 2: God's Bigger Plan

Ask your child, what are some things you'd love to be able to do in life, what are your big dreams? Lead your child to write some of these on the **MY FUTURE** page. If they're having trouble thinking of some things, share what some of your dreams were as a kid. It's OK if they did/didn't come true. This is a time for him/her to think big. In Kickstarter 1, the child did the activity alone, do this one together.

Once done read, **Jeremiah 29:11**:  
*"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come."*

Tell your child: God has big plans for you. Right now you may not know exactly what those plans are. What you can do as you wait to know God's plan for your life is follow Him and obey Him now. God has given you dreams and passions, and He knows which ones are the right ones to follow, so live for Him

today, and He'll guide your tomorrow.

## Kickstarter 3-Be authentic

Ask your child: what do you think it means to be authentic?

Being authentic means not being fake or copying but being real, being YOU. Sometimes all we see is how we are different than others, but God designed us that way. Samuel was given the task of anointing the next king out of Jesse's family. Jesse brings his sons and lines them up in front of Samuel.

Read **1 Samuel 16:6-13**.

*When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab. He thought, "This has to be the one the Lord wants me to anoint for him."*

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart."*

*Then Jesse called for Abinadab. He had him walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord hasn't chosen him either." Then Jesse had Shammah walk by. But Samuel said, "The Lord hasn't chosen him either."*

*Jesse had seven of his sons walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said to him, "The Lord hasn't chosen any of them." So he asked Jesse, "Are these the only sons you have?"*



*"No," Jesse answered. "My youngest son is taking care of the sheep."*

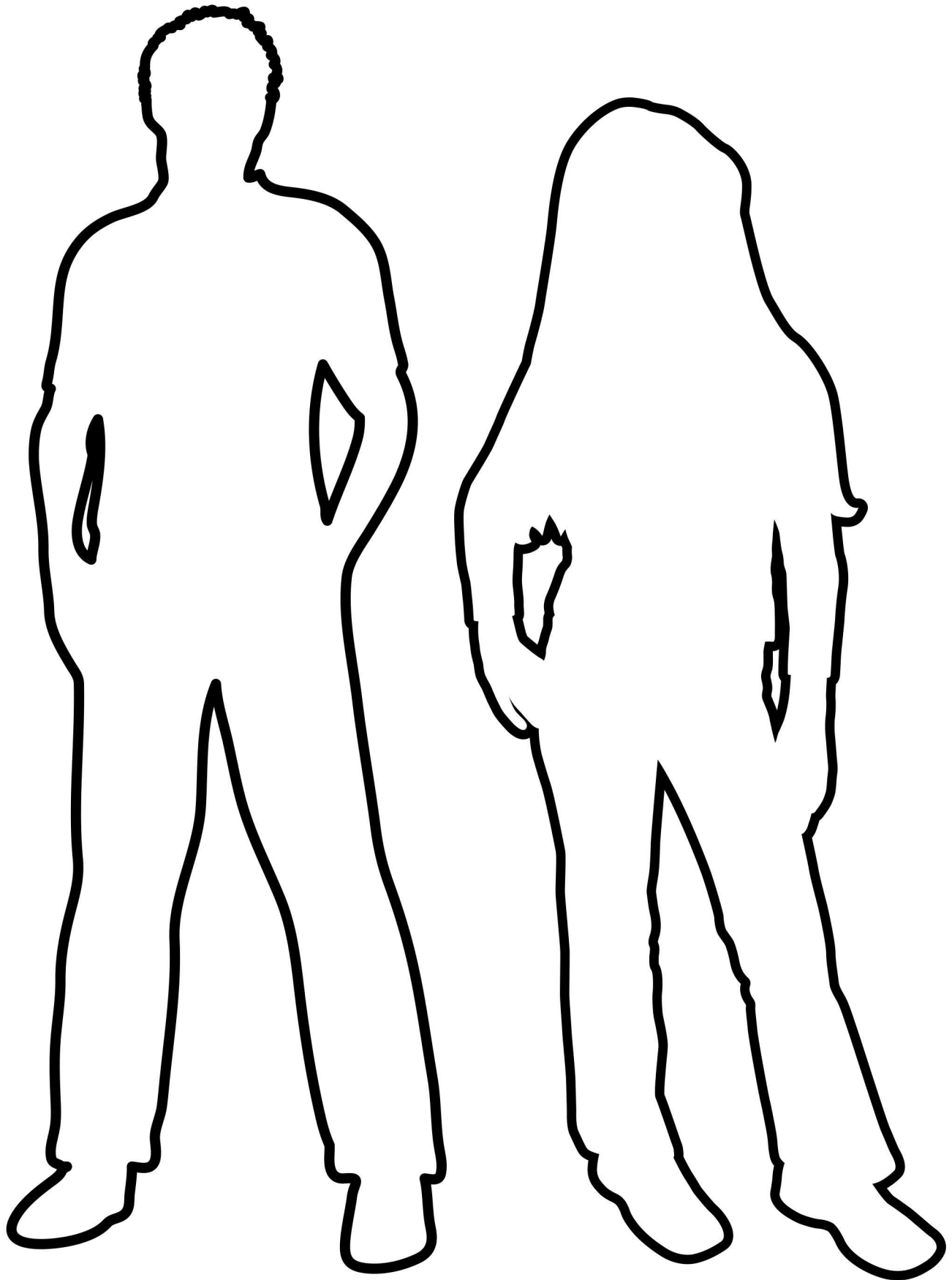
*Samuel said, "Send for him. We won't sit down to eat until he arrives."*

*So Jesse sent for his son and had him brought in. His skin was tanned. He had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Get up and anoint him. He is the one."*

*So Samuel got the animal horn that was filled with olive oil. He anointed David in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came on David with power. Samuel went back to Ramah.*

Look at David. He was definitely different. In fact, his Dad didn't even bother having him show up for this time between his sons and Samuel. God sees people very differently than we see ourselves. God chose David because David was different and God knew his heart.

Tell your child God has created them to be different. All those differences are intentional; God chose those qualities for you alone. Have your child take a good, honest look at himself/herself and write down all the ways he/she is unique/different on the "I am me" sheet. You can choose for them to do this alone or with you. Gauge your own child's needs.





## **MY FUTURE**



**I AM ME**

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### ***Identity Symbol***

Ask a few significant people in your child's life to write a letter or card to them with the purpose of telling your child what they see in him/her. Use the questions below to give to the individuals writing cards as a guide.

Parents, take these letters/cards and see if there is a similar thread running through all of them that can guide you in choosing an identity symbol for your child. For instance, if people say your child exhibits wisdom or intelligence, the identity symbol could be an owl. If your child puts a ton of time, energy and persistence into a certain sport, maybe a new piece of sports equipment could be the symbol. Use your imagination as you read the letters, then choose what the symbol will be. Make it, buy it, engrave it, choose to make this as elaborate as you'd like. The idea is to make this symbol very individualized, something that is extremely unique to your child. Here are a few other ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- **Wise/intelligent-owl, set of books**
- **Athletic-sports equipment**
- **Kind/compassionate-leather bracelet embossed with words, heart**
- **Good friend-framed picture of friends**
- **Fun to be around-smiley face jewelry, joke book that friends/family sign**

- **Creative-art set, personalized stationary, camera**
- **Great at technology-new device, program for computer**
- **Thoughtful-journal**

Set aside a time to present your child with the letters/cards and identity symbol. Read the cards with him/her. Give your child the identity symbol and explain the reason you chose this symbol. You can refer to the Identity Symbol script to guide this presentation.

### **Question Guide for letters**

I'm asking you to write a letter or card to my child as a final piece to a family experience I'm doing with him/her. I'm asking you to contribute because you know my child well, and he/she looks up to you a great deal. It would mean a lot to me if you could take a minute to write him/her a letter or card and include the answers to some of the following questions:

1. ***What character traits do you see my child exhibiting?***
2. ***What do you see my child being passionate about?***
3. ***What are my child's talents?***
4. ***What makes my child unique?***





### **Identity Symbol Presentation Script**

I've enjoyed studying with you about identity and figuring out who you are. We've asked a few people who know you best to write a letter to you telling about the kind of person that you are and what they see in you. Let's read those letters...

#### ***(read the letters together)***

You can see through all these that one big idea keeps coming up and that is X. We want you to have a symbol that will remind you that X is what people see in you.

#### ***(present the symbol)***

We are proud to know that God has created you with a purpose, He has big plans for you, and He has created you to be uniquely you. Our prayer is that you'll see all the ways that you're different as HOW God created you.

You have been uniquely created to complete God's purpose for you.

As you grow up, you'll continue to realize your differences and God's purpose for you. As you do, we hope you'll follow His path for you because He has created you to be X (attribute associated with identity symbol).