

TEACHER'S MANUAL

Your sneaking suspicions?

by Simon Smart

Sample Lesson

to be used with

A sneaking suspicion by John Dickson

and

Your sneaking suspicions? Student handbook

CEP



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To be used with *A sneaking suspicion* by John Dickson AND *Your sneaking suspicions?* Student handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to *Your sneaking suspicions?* Teacher's manual.

This publication is written for teachers of students in years 8–10, aged between 13–16 years. It is part of a package comprising John Dickson's *A sneaking suspicion*, the Student handbook *Your sneaking suspicions?* and this Teacher's manual.

These resources are particularly focused on helping students engage with their 'big questions' about life and God. These important issues – like life, death, relationships, suffering, forgiveness and meaning – are dealt with in an engaging and straightforward way.

This product forms part of the range of high school resources developed for Christian studies classes in Christian schools and Special Religious Education classes in State schools.

All Christian Education Publications are grounded in the belief that God is the source of all truth and his Word, the Bible, is where God reveals himself and his saving purposes. God has acted in Christ to achieve his saving purposes for humanity.

CEP high school resources aim to help students to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith, to respond to the claims of Christ and to grapple with how to apply their faith to life.

CEP high school resources cover the following six aspects of the Christian studies program assisting students to:

Engage with the Bible

Students will be helped to read, understand and learn to apply the Bible to their lives and will be introduced to the concepts of Biblical theology.

Know the gospel

Students will learn about the life and teaching of Jesus, come to appreciate the significance of his death and resurrection and consider their own response to him.

Examine different worldviews

In a safe and supportive environment students will be encouraged to question, discuss and evaluate critically other worldviews and practices.

Learn about their Christian heritage

Students will have the opportunity to learn about key events and people who have impacted history as they have put their faith into action.

Examine ethical issues

Students will be encouraged to see the relationship between faith and behaviour as they examine a range of personal and public ethical issues.

Have opportunity for personal spiritual growth

Students will be encouraged to grow in their personal knowledge of God and in their worship, trust and obedience in the context of Christian community and through opportunities to serve others.

Using *Your sneaking suspicions?* Teacher's manual

For each chapter in John Dickson's book *A sneaking suspicion*, there is a chapter in the student handbook and a chapter in the teacher's manual. The teacher's manual is full of suggestions and is designed to make your life easier! You can make choices that best suit your class, the time you have available and the resources you have access to. It is not expected that you will do everything in each chapter – although we'd like to hear from anyone who tries!

The **introductory page** for each chapter gives you an overview of what is contained in the rest of the chapter allowing you to see suggested activities 'at a glance'. The main components of the lesson are built around the **Get started – Engage – Follow it up** structure.

The crunch

This is the 'big idea' of the chapter. Keeping this in mind will help you stay on track in discussions and activities with students.

Drive it home

This is linked to **The crunch** and reminds you to conclude the lesson with the 'big idea' and its implications for the students. It is usually closely tied to the concluding paragraphs in the corresponding chapter of *A sneaking suspicion*.

Multimedia

These suggestions are a key feature of the teacher's manual.

It is suggested that you create a video with **Vox pop** segments for each chapter. **Vox pop** questions to use in video interviews are provided for each chapter introducing the key ideas. This can be done fairly simply and the effect is to make connections with real people, while stimulating student thinking and discussion. Either people on the street or students from your school would be suitable subjects. This video could be filmed by the students themselves prior to each lesson, perhaps during a lunch break. Alternatively, all the **Vox pop** segments could be filmed prior to beginning this unit. This will build up into a valuable resource that could be used again and again.

Film clips and **TV segments** are sometimes suggested. These would usually be short segments only. It is not suggested that you watch an entire film with students. **Music** tracks are also suggested as a high-interest way of making connection with students and raising issues to discuss.

Get started

These activities are designed to get the students thinking about the key issues in each chapter. They will usually include a range of activities and will suit a variety of learning styles and student abilities.

Engage

This double page spread provides you with a mini-version of the corresponding student pages. You can see how suggested activities link to the student handbook. These activities include a wide variety of options – discussion, role play, short writing tasks, small group activities, Bible links and so on. Some activities are also provided with **Black Line Masters** (BLMs) for you to copy and use in the lesson.

Follow it up

These activities will help focus students on **The crunch** of each chapter. Some extension tasks have also been included for teachers who have longer lesson times or who wish to spend extra time on Bible links. Some **Follow it up** activities have **Black Line Masters** provided.

NOTE: It would be helpful to have a ready supply of notepaper for each lesson.

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Chapter

THE LOOK

The crunch

The obsession with image and fashion deceives us into thinking that outside appearance is what life is about. This is a grand deception that places us in danger of missing out on the essential things of life.



Get started

An alien looks at humans

Film

Zoolander (2001)

Engage

Role models

Character v 'the look'

The look that kills
Costs of the body beautiful
Thinking big not small

My life – thinking big

God's picture
What Tiffany discovered
Focusing on how I look

Follow it up

Role-play

The look

Song

Pete Murray, 'So beautiful' (2003)

Film

Shrek (2001)

Discuss

Eating disorders
How far is too far?
The fashion industry
Bible links

Multimedia

Vox pop

How important is it to have the right look?

Why is fashion so important to people?

Video clips

A series of catwalk shots – girls and guys and 'ordinary' people in the street.

Collage of different looks set to music: dance, jock, surf, nightclub, gyms.

Music

Pete Murray, 'So beautiful' (2003)

'Well I'm here to tell you babe the game you're in is just a game. So damn pretentious.'

Film

Shallow Hal (2001)

Aladdin (1992)

Shrek 1 (2001) or *2* (2004)

Bridget Jones diary (2001)

Drive it home

When we lose sight of the big questions of life we are in danger of being obsessed with the small and insignificant. The value of each individual, and the deeper, spiritually significant things in life, need our attention.



GET STARTED



An alien look at humans

In groups ask the students to imagine that they were part of an alien task force given the job of coming to Earth to report on human beings. Due to a malfunction in their spacecraft, the aliens had only the briefest stay on Earth before having to leave again. Just before leaving the planet, they grabbed a bunch of popular fashion and entertainment magazines to take with them, to use as the basis of their report.

Ask the students to go through some magazines, to write the report. (Bring as many of these to class as possible.) Ask them to include in the report:

What do men and women look like?

What do humans wear?

What are the big concerns of humans?

How do humans relate to each other?

Having written the reports, ask the students to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Once this has been done, repeat the exercise, only this time, tell the students that a second mission gave the aliens the opportunity to live with an Australian family for six weeks! Ask them to re-write the report using information gleaned from this experience.

Examine the contrasts in the two reports.



Zoolander (2001)

This quotation from the character Derek Zoolander could be discussed.

'I'm sure there must be something more to life than being really, really good looking. I've got to find out what that is.'

Ask the students to think about what things in life are more significant.

'The look' that kills

It was reported in *Who Magazine* that in June 2004 just after her high school graduation, Mary Kate Olsen was committed to a treatment centre. Increasingly thin and clearly unhealthy, Mary Kate appears to share a common problem for young people – an eating disorder. 'They finally reached the point where they had to act. They didn't want to find her dead on the floor from not eating.' (*Who magazine*)

Costs of the body beautiful
(pages 24–28)

My life Thinking big, not small

THE BIGGEST PICTURE of all

God's picture of life, us, and his kingdom

Write down the 'big picture' messages these Bible passages have for us.

Psalms 139:13–16 Matthew 6:19–24

Proverbs 31:30

What Tiffany discovered
(Read pages 21–22 and 28–29).
What things did Tiffany feel she had learnt through her experiences?

Checking out my focus

Focusing on how I look

Good stuff Bad stuff

What do you think about Jesus' advice to 'seek his kingdom'?

God's picture of life, us, and his kingdom

Ask the students to examine the Bible passages and to write down the 'big picture' messages they have for us. Photocopy page 21 for the students, or make an OHP transparency.

What Tiffany discovered

Ask the students to read pages 21–22 and 28–29 of *A sneaking suspicion* and then identify the life lessons that Tiffany learned.

Focusing on how I look

The aim is to think about where our own emphasis lies – the things that are okay about caring about our appearance, and also the ways we can be led astray. It is important not to deny the value of caring about how we look and present ourselves. The focus is on avoiding a completely shallow and superficial existence.

In the positive column (good stuff) students could write such things as: feeling good about ourselves; coming across well to others; staying healthy, and strong; avoiding pitfalls of overeating, unhealthy eating, and damage to the body due to neglect or misuse.

In the negative (bad stuff) category students could note such things as:

- becoming obsessed with the way I look;
- feeling bad about the things that I can't change;
- thinking that my value comes from the way I look and the things I wear;
- considering that my significance as a person is directly related to the fashion I can afford, the image I can portray, forgetting the really important things about who I am.

Discuss with the students the danger of missing the biggest things in life – their relationship with God and with others; their value as a unique individual made in God's image.

Encourage the students to see that outward beauty or image can be deceiving, or at least very disappointing. People who are only concerned with 'the look' can be shallow, self-obsessed and unappealing.

My life - thinking big

Encourage the students to think in terms of the big or important things in life. Ask the students to write all the things that they regard as the big things. These can be their hopes and dreams, relationships, and whatever they consider really important. They may need some prompting here. Such things as love, sex, relationships, family, travel, career, spirituality, house, car, money, fulfilment, achievement, travel, experiences, hobbies, success, status and so on are fairly typical things for people to consider.

Try to emphasise how different this list would look if only appearance and image mattered. There will be things on this list that would fit of course, but hopefully they are starting to think about the 'big picture.'

FOLLOW IT UP



Role play - 'the look'

Breaking the class into groups ask each group to construct a short role-play with the issue of 'the look' being of central significance.

Half the groups should aim to depict a healthy or constructive attitude to appearance, while the other half depict an unhealthy approach. Suggest such focus areas as:

- exercise
- clothes and fashion
- food and eating
- image



Pete Murray, 'So beautiful'

Play the song to the class. Lyrics may be found on page 23. Discuss the central message of the song and the scorn he pours on an overemphasis on appearance.



Shrek (2001)

In the final scene in *Shrek*, the princess is sad because all she wants is to be beautiful. Shrek, of course thinks that she is beautiful and lets her know this. There is much that can be said here about judging by appearances and links may be made to Matthew 23:25–28 and Galatians 2:6.



Eating disorders

The following may be useful in a discussion of the impact of over concern for appearance.

Anorexia nervosa is said to be the third most common chronic illness for teenage girls in Australia. In a recent Melbourne University study 10% of teenage boys were using muscle-building drugs! (Chee Chee Leung, *The age*, 21/11/03)

In a recent study by Deakin University of over 500 boys and girls over a two-year period, a 'drift downward' in positive self-views was found from early childhood. Nearly half the girls and 38% of the boys wanted to be thinner, and more than 20% of both sexes aged from 8–10 were already dieting regularly. (Judy Adamson, *SMH*, 25/9/03)

Latrobe University professor Susan Paxton says an estimated 5–6% of young women had a serious eating disorder. In relation to the spate of new makeover programmes on TV she says the message they send out is that 'if you change the way you look and you pay huge sums of money for it, your life is going to be better.' (Amanda Dunn, *The age*, 13/12/03)

NOTE: Be sensitive to the possibility that some students in your class may struggle with eating disorders, or personally know someone who does. Be careful not to make simplistic or judgemental comments. Look for danger signs and discuss any concerns with your school counsellor.

Find out more about anorexia nervosa and bulimia on these websites.

<http://www.remuda-ranch.com/>

<http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/index.html>

http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Eating_Disorders



How far is too far?

See BLM on page 22 for this exercise. This details the experience of a woman and the lengths she went to in order to make herself taller.



The fashion industry

As a class consider the role that the fashion industry plays in society's obsession with having the right look. To what extent are we 'at the mercy' of advertising and marketing experts? What would happen if we ignored the fashion industry pressure to be 'up to date' in our clothes, shoes, music, and movies?

BIBLE LINKS

Psalm 139:13–16 (NIV)

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵ 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,

¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me

were written in your book

before one of them came to be.

Proverbs 31:30 (NIV)

³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Matthew 6:19–24 (NIV)

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?

26-year-old lawyer Sara Voramen hated being short. She was only 154 cm tall. This, she says effected her self-esteem. She says people didn't take her seriously. She longed to be taller.

Her solution to the problem was to fly to Russia for surgery to lengthen her legs. Doctors broke her legs in four places for each leg. After having rods and rings inserted in her legs, the stretching process began, millimetre by millimetre. It was extremely painful. She needed crutches to walk on. The whole process took one whole year. It cost \$40,000.

All of this added 8 centimetres to her height.

(Lucy McWilliam, Cosmopolitan, July 2004)

What response do you have to this story?

Were the actions of this woman justifiable?

Was she taking physical appearance too far?

How far is too far?

SO BEAUTIFUL

Found myself just the other day
In the backyard of a friends place,
Thinkin' about you,
Thinkin' of the crowd you're in,
What you up to where you been
(Just thinkin')

You know the clothes that you wear,
And the colours in your hair
Shouldn't change you
Now you tell me why is it so
You bigger than mighty Joe,
(At least you think so)

God my fingers burn,
Now when I think of touching your hair
You have changed so much that I don't
know,
If I can call you and tell you I care
And I would love to bring you down,
Plant your feet back on the ground

Throw my smoke down on the ground,
Turn my head and I heard the sound,
(That reminded me)
Of the days so young and sweet
Always so much fun to me
(At least I thought so)

Now you think you're so damn fine
You can rule the world no not mine,
I don't think so

God my fingers burn,
Now when I think of touching your hair
You have changed so much that I don't
know,
If I can call you and tell you I care

You know the scene you're in,
And the people that you've been with
Just get to me,
But you think I'm not as cool,
As you are so beautiful
Who you fooling

Well I'm here to tell you babe
The game you're in is just a game
It's so damn pretentious

God my fingers burn,
Now when I think of touching your hair
You have changed so much that I don't
know,
If I can call you and tell you I care
And I would love to bring you down,
And plant your feet back on the ground

You think you're so beautiful
(So beautiful)

Peter Murray, *Feeler*, Sony Music Australia, 2003. Used by kind permission.