

Wonderfully

enjoying life with God's special gift

Made

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Wonderfully Made

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Mary Winter
and Rachel Jones

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Welcome to *Wonderfully Made!*

The Bible says that our children are wonderfully made—and holding your newborn baby, it's not hard to see why. But what comes next is an emotional rollercoaster of highs and lows: side-splitting silliness and sleepless nights; heart-swelling pride and mind-numbing boredom. No wonder so many of us feel daunted and unprepared!

For lots of mums, toddler group has always been a great place to get together and chat about the concerns we face every day, and share ideas and tips we've found useful. There'll certainly be lots of space for that in this course! But we hope that *Wonderfully Made* is also a springboard to get you discussing some of the bigger questions you might have about the task of raising little humans, and get you thinking about who we are and why we're here. That's why we'll consider one of the foundational teachings of the Bible: that our children have been made "in God's image" by a Creator who loves them.

Whatever you believe, this course isn't about trying to give you all the answers, or making you feel inadequate. It's about supporting each other as we figure out how to survive as parents of young children.

How to use this handbook



Watch

Each session we hear from a mum about her parenting experience, before watching a short talk from Mary Winter. You can scribble down notes or questions in the space provided, or just sit back and watch.



Discuss

A chance to share your thoughts and ideas on the week's topic. Everyone will come to this course with their own unique set of experiences; so be honest and get stuck in!



Try this at home

Ideas to help you put into practice what you've learned—from parenting tips to fun activities to try with your toddler. Not everything will be suitable for your little one, so don't beat yourself up about what you are or aren't doing. Some of the best suggestions will come from the other parents sitting next to you!



Going further

If you'd like to think a little further about the "big questions" raised in each session, there's a passage from the Bible to read and a couple of questions to help you mull it over. If you've never read the Bible before, don't worry—it's not about knowing all the right answers!



Introduction:

So many questions



Watch

– The hardest thing about being a parent is...

– So many questions!

– Our children are wonderfully made.



Discuss

What do you think is the hardest thing about being a new parent?

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What were some of the practical questions you had when you were dealing with a new baby? What about now?

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Where did you look for answers to those questions?

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Do you have any "bigger" life questions that you would like to talk over in the following weeks?

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Try this at home...

- **Ask your parents or grandparents about their experience of raising you!** What did they most enjoy about being a parent? What might they do differently if they had another chance? What do they wish they'd known before they became a parent?

- **Make a family photo tree.** Include all those people who are important in your child's life, not just immediate family—friends, godparents, and those who love and support your family.
- **Keep a journal** (or maybe even write a blog!). This doesn't have to be an everyday burden, but it can help to lend perspective on the daily struggles. Force yourself to be positive, as well as honest about the negatives. Reading back and seeing how your child (and you) have changed and grown will be a real joy—and can help you to remember that each stage will eventually end!

Going further

This is a passage from the Bible; it's a song from the book of Psalms, a collection of songs written to and about God. The writer is talking to God.

- 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.*

Psalm 139 v 13-16

Think about it:

What does this Bible passage have to say about how our children were made?

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When the writer thinks about that, what does it make him do?
(Look at the start of verse 14.)

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We don't really know what will happen to our children tomorrow, let alone in 20 or 30 years' time! But look at verse 16. How does that make you feel?

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.....

Suppose God does know your child as well as this psalm says he does. What would you say to him?

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