

Lesson 1 / December 6, 2009

# Formed in Love

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## STEP 1

Lesson 1

### Focus:

God designed you with wonderful things in mind.

Lesson 1

### Bible Basis:

Luke 1:5-25, 57-79

Students will contemplate how God formed them with purpose by reflecting on a story of an operation done on a baby in the womb.

#### Materials:

- whiteboard
- markers
- a computer with Internet access (optional) or a copy of the “hand of hope” picture (see page 2)

**E**xplain that today’s lesson focus is “God designed you with wonderful things in mind.”

Ask the students the following questions and write their answers on the whiteboard as they call them out.

- 1** **What are some ways that expectant parents attempt to communicate with their unborn children?** (*talk to the unborn baby while at the mother’s stomach level, sing to the baby, play music that you enjoy listening to or classical tunes for the baby, take ultrasound picture, pay a specialized company to perform a 3D ultrasound and take 3D photographs of the unborn baby, touch the mother’s stomach and feel for kicks, give the unborn baby a fun nickname, etc.*)
- 2** **Why do parents do these things with their unborn babies?** (*to bond with the baby because research has proven a baby can hear things while in the womb, because the future parents already feel love for their boy or girl, etc.*)

Today’s Bible story focuses on the events leading up to the birth of John the Baptist—the baby who leaped in his mother’s womb when he was in the same room as his cousin Jesus. Some people don’t believe that an unborn baby is a child ... but that isn’t God’s view at all. Scripture is filled with references of God’s creation of babies in their mother’s womb. It also mentions how God has carefully and wonderfully made each person and planned out his or her life even before the child takes a breath.

Let’s take a look at an amazing story. On August 19, 1999, a veteran photojournalist, Mr. Clancy, was hired by *USA Today* to photograph a surgery. The operation was for a child with spina bifida, and this specialized surgical procedure was going to be performed on a twenty-one-week-old unborn baby. The baby, in his mother’s womb, was operated on through a small incision in the uterus. During the surgery, the baby’s entire arm thrust out of the incision and then pulled back until just his little hand showed. As the doctor reached over and lifted the baby’s hand, the baby squeezed the doctor’s finger. Just then, a photograph was taken. This picture later would be seen by millions, referred to by the media as “the hand of a fetus that

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## Memory Verse

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

—Ephesians 2:10

touched the world.” Mr. Clancy calls the photo “the hand of hope”—having no idea that it would change his life forever. (If possible, show a printout of this picture or visit the website if your classroom has a computer with Internet access. The photo and story related to this event can be seen at [<http://www.michaelclancy.com>]. Warn students that the photograph is graphic because it is a very complicated surgery. The picture is also amazing because it is the earliest human interaction ever photographed.)

**Answer the following questions as a group:**

- ▶ **What do you think the doctor's reaction was when the tiny unborn baby reached out of the incision and grabbed his finger?** (*awe, a desire to help the baby survive, an unusual bond, a profound belief that the baby in the womb is indeed alive, etc.*)
- ▶ **Would it surprise you to learn that this doctor denies that any interaction took place between him and the baby, saying both mother and baby were highly sedated? The photographer insists that the baby thrust out of the opening on his own.** Invite feedback to this doctor's take on what happened.
- ▶ **Why do you think the photographer chose to share his photograph with the world?** (*to let everyone know that unborn babies are alive, to convey the will to live that an unborn baby has, to show love and bonding between an unborn baby and those who have already been born, to show the amazement of modern technology, to provide hope, etc.*)
- ▶ **Would it surprise you to learn that this photographer is now an advocate for pro-life groups?** Invite feedback.
- ▶ **Why do you think one man (the doctor) was not impacted by the encounter while the other man's stance on life in the womb completely changed?**
- ▶ **Do you think people who don't believe an unborn baby is a human being should see this photograph? Why or why not?**

God cares about each person that He creates. He designed each of us with wonderful things in mind. He knew everything about us before we ever came to be. We are His plan and design.

In our lesson today, we are going to look at another baby that had a major impact on the world. He didn't stick his hand out of the womb, but he did leap inside of it.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *High School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Source:

Michael Clancy: guest speaker for Colorado Springs Life Network's Annual Gala and Silent Auction (Clancy was speaker October 3, 2009)  
 [<http://www.michaelclancy.com>]

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## STEP 4

### Lesson 1 Focus:

God designed you with wonderful things in mind.

### Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Luke 1:5-25, 57-79

### Materials:



- small blank note card (one per student)
- pens or pencils

**J**ohn the Baptist was an unexpected gift to his parents, but he wasn't unexpected to God. God had a very specific purpose for John the Baptist's life—to pave the way for Jesus Christ.

Ten years after the surgery we discussed in Step 1, the boy whose hand leapt out of the womb, Samuel Armas, is doing well. He is doing so well that he recently won first place in a 25-yard swimming competition for the backstroke.

“When I see that picture, the first thing I think of is how special and lucky I am to have God use me that way,” Samuel told FOXNews.com. The photograph, which first appeared in *USA Today* on September 7, 1999, quickly spread around the globe as proof of development in the womb and was later cited during congressional debates on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, which passed in 2000. (For pictures of Samuel today, click on: [<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,519181,00.html>]).

Clancy, who has not photographed a surgery since Samuel's, told about how he met Samuel for the third time in 2007 during an event for Come Alive Ministries in Atlanta. “His eyes just lit up because he was born famous because of that picture,” said Clancy. “It was amazing.”

-  How does it make you feel to see pictures of (or hear about) Samuel living a healthy, happy life?
-  How does knowing that God cares for the unborn baby and plans his or her life make you feel about your own life? (*less worried about things, able to trust Him fully, thankful that He's in control, etc.*)

Every day of your life is a gift from the Lord. Take a moment now to write down some of the ways that God has made your life with purpose. Think about the gifts, abilities, passions, and experiences that God has given you. He has given you these things to help you fulfill the calling He has on your life. You are made differently from everyone else, and your uniqueness is in line with His purpose for your life.

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**Memory Verse**

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Keep the note and post it somewhere in your room, locker, or journal to remind you of this important truth. When you feel down about something, look at it and remember how you are a part of God's greater plan. God designed you with wonderful things in mind. He has great works for you to do!

Close with prayer.

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Source:

Joshua Rhett Miller, "Ten Years Later, Boy's 'Hand of Hope' Continues to Spark Debate," *Fox News*,  
[<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,519181,00.html>]

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