

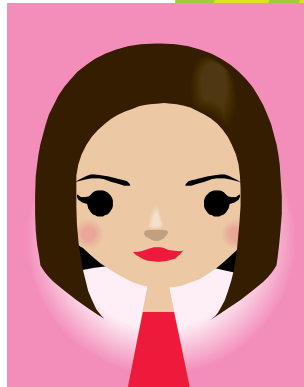


*I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made; your works are wonderful I
know that full well.*

Psalm 139:14

“Growing up God’s Way”

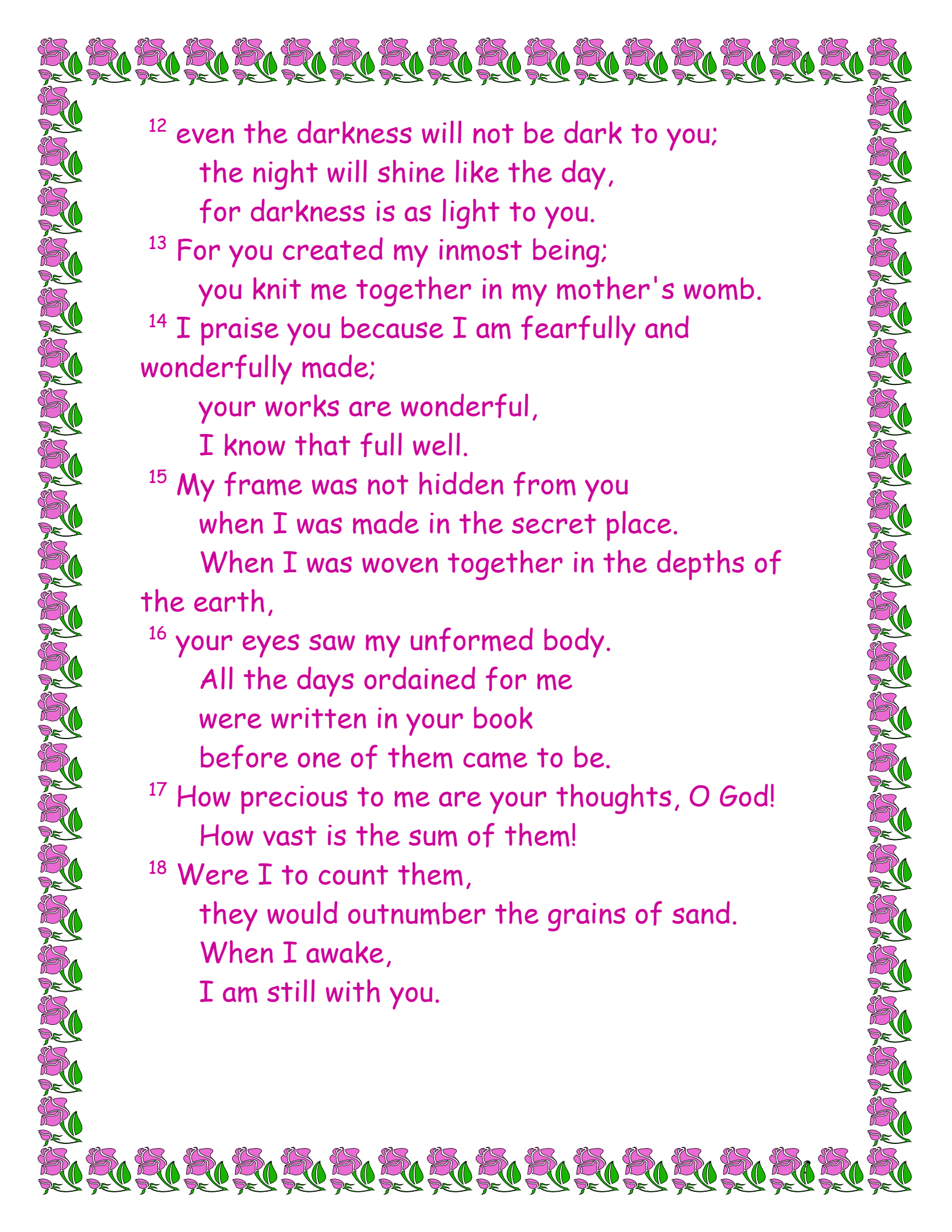
By: Mrs Marlene Naidoo





Psalm 139:1 - 18

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.
- ⁵ You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, ^lyou are there.
- ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"

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- 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
- 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.
- 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand.
When I awake,
I am still with you.

God made our bodies and designed them to work a certain way. It is good for you to take some time to see how awesome your body is and how it is made to work.

While you are growing up, you go through different stages of life: baby, childhood, adolescence, and so on until we reach old age. Right now you are about to enter your adolescence stage where you see how your body is changing and this stage is called Puberty. Everyone goes through puberty, some children develop sooner and some later. Our bodies grow in many ways often causing a bit of distress. As growing girls you will notice the changes in your bodies, your brains develop and grow and your emotions can change quickly.

Puberty occurs when two parts of the brain called the **hypothalamus** and the **pituitary** gland start making a lot more of some hormones including growth hormones. These hormones act on other parts of your body to make the changes happen. Both boys and girls have these hormones but they act on different parts of their bodies.



Hormones are chemicals that are made by one part of your body (a gland) to act on a different part, such as bones. For example a gland in your brain makes growth hormone, and it works by making your leg, foot and arm bones grow longer. You have many

hormones that travel around in your bloodstream doing different jobs. For girls these hormones work on their ovaries (where all the eggs that they might ever use have been stored since before they were born), as well as on their adrenal glands, so that they make more of the female sex hormones such as oestrogen and progesterone


Some changes are the same for both girls and boys. Some of these changes are: growing taller and getting bigger feet, changing shape, feeling 'moody', getting hairier on arms and legs and growing new hair under arms and in the pubic area, sweating more (this is when we need to really take care of your body) and also getting oilier skin and often some pimples.



Always remember to use the correct names for your body parts. Your body is private therefore you have to cover it up and not allow anyone to touch your bodies.

You can feel good about your bodies because you know God created it. You can thank God for His creation. Psalm 139:14 says it so beautifully, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know that full well."

As Christian children, God will help you give your body the best care. God will guide you to respect your bodies. He will lead you to respect others too. You may come across girls that think bad thoughts and you will see them write bad words on bathroom walls and tell jokes that make you feel uncomfortable but Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:19 says, "Out of the heart comes evil



thoughts....." but God wants our thoughts to be pure and holy, this means having good thoughts.

We are sanctified by Jesus through the Holy Spirit; God leads us to a new life. This allows us to follow the advice of the apostle Paul: "whatever is true; whatever is honourable; just, pure, lovely, commendable, think about these things." Phil 4:18.

It's smart to talk about important things with people who care enough about you, to make sure you get everything straight and who better than your parents and often times your teacher.


We are to rely on God's mercy and strength, especially when we experience our menstruation (You will find all the information you need about menstruation towards the end). It helps us see the need to delve a little deeper into God's word, be a little more focused on prayer and to love those around us. Knowing the biological facts is good but putting it into the context of God's beautiful design gives us a clearer picture.

What is particularly unique about what you are going through is the goodness and beauty of something that our culture thinks is merely a "pain in the neck" or an unfair burden on young girls: Menstruation.

As God's children, we must not give into these sad attitudes but to approach the onset of menstruation as an opportunity to get to know and understand how our body works, and to give thanks to God for how we are made. Menstruation should not be seen as a curse or a burden, but as a season of life given to you by God our Father as a blessing.

Here are a few scriptures that would help you understand:-

- Psalm 139:13-14 says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are



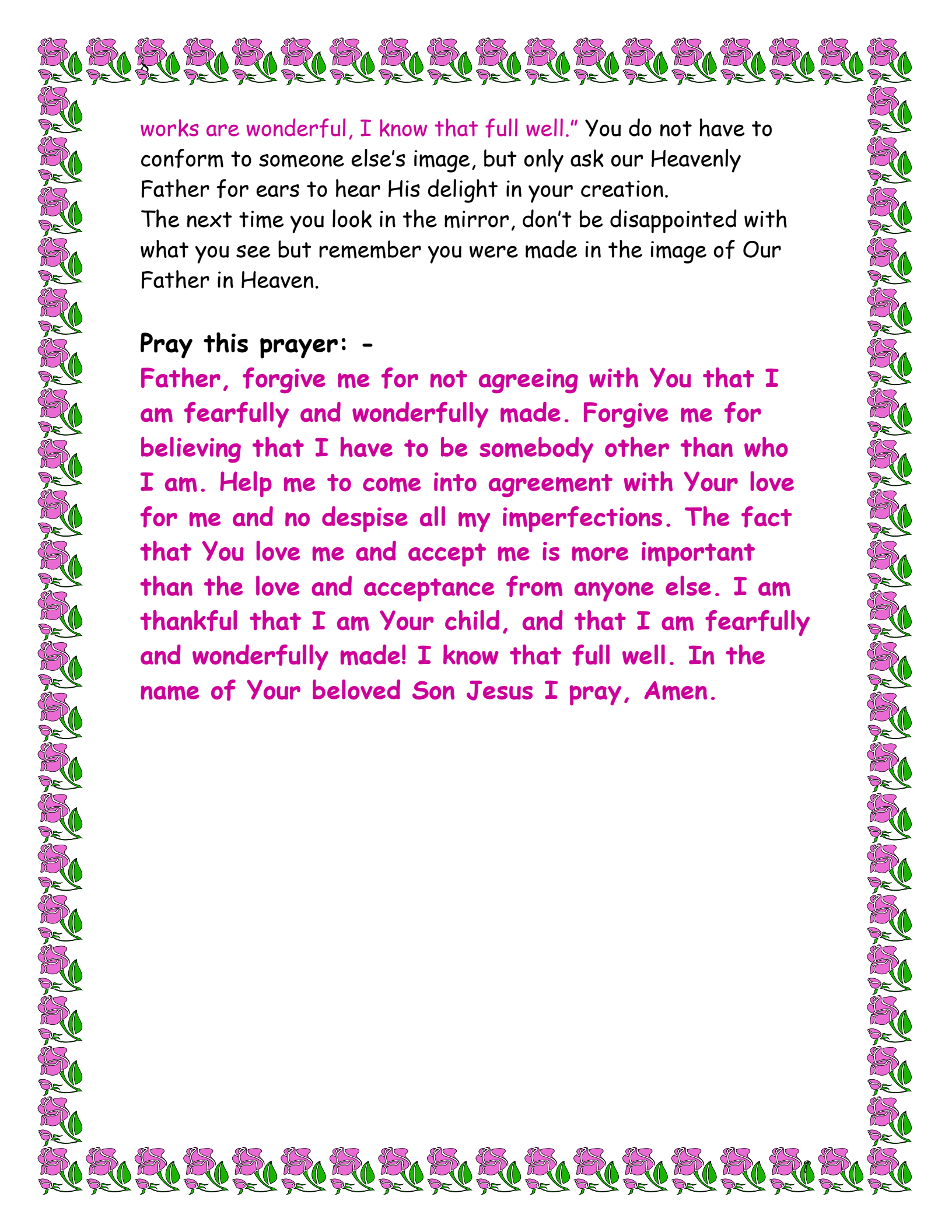
wonderful, I know that full well" (NIV). How can we have a distorted image of ourselves when it is our Heavenly Father who created us. If you have a negative body image, we need to pray about this. God has given each of you an inner beauty.

- Proverbs 31:30 says, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (NIV).
- First Peter 3:3-5 says, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful (NIV)."

Therefore girls, be encouraged to see your beauty as both internal and external, within a biblical concept. The lies behind the media messages about beauty will not help you to build a solid self-image.

Problems arise and you begin to look in the mirror and wish you were different, maybe you think you are too short, or too tall, or too heavy, or too thin. The list never seems to end. Even the super model seems to be preoccupied with little imperfections that nobody notices. Basically we're saying we are not happy the way God created us, and then we try to change our appearance to gain acceptance and love.

True love and acceptance does not come from changing ourselves to become more loveable. According to Psalm 139, we are already loved just the way we are. In verse 14, the psalmist cries out, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your



works are wonderful, I know that full well." You do not have to conform to someone else's image, but only ask our Heavenly Father for ears to hear His delight in your creation. The next time you look in the mirror, don't be disappointed with what you see but remember you were made in the image of Our Father in Heaven.

Pray this prayer: -

Father, forgive me for not agreeing with You that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Forgive me for believing that I have to be somebody other than who I am. Help me to come into agreement with Your love for me and no despise all my imperfections. The fact that You love me and accept me is more important than the love and acceptance from anyone else. I am thankful that I am Your child, and that I am fearfully and wonderfully made! I know that full well. In the name of Your beloved Son Jesus I pray, Amen.



Information about Menstruation

After our discussions many girls wanted to know the following questions: -

- What was menstruation?
- How does it affect us?
- Why must we have this?

With a bit of research, I have put this information together for you. I have tried to make it simple for you to understand, if there are any questions you need answered please come and discuss it with us.

Menstruation

Menstruation comes from a Latin word 'mens' which means month. Most girls and women have their periods about once a month.

Girls have two **ovaries** which both contain thousands of eggs.

- About once a month, one egg leaves the ovary (ovulation) and travels down the fallopian tube towards the uterus (womb).
- While the egg is developing and travelling the uterus starts preparing for it by building up its lining with extra blood and tissue.
(This is just like making a nest.)
- If the egg is fertilized by a male sperm, then your body will use that 'nest' to protect and nourish the egg as it grows into a baby.

- If the egg is not fertilized then it will keep going, passing through the **vagina** and taking with it the extra blood and tissue that wasn't needed. This is what is called a 'period'. A period usually lasts around 4 -7days. The egg is so tiny that you will not see it.
- About two weeks later another egg leaves the ovary and the whole thing starts again.
- This menstrual 'cycle' usually takes 28 days, but it can be longer or shorter.
- When you start your periods they may not be very regular at first. (They may not happen every month or you may have a light then a heavy period.)
- Everyone is different but over time you will get to know what your cycle is like.

What can affect your periods?



- Girls who do not have very much body fat may not have regular periods or may not start periods until much later than others. Some athletes and dancers may have very little fat (and lots of muscles). Without some body fat you don't ovulate and without ovulation you can't have a baby.
- Women and girls who lose a lot of weight, or suffer from anorexia, do not menstruate (and also become very ill).
- Being worried or stressed about something in



your life can cause periods to be late.

- Women or girls who smoke have more painful periods because nicotine affects the flow of blood to the muscles in the uterus so they get cramps.
- But the main thing that makes periods late or not come is when a woman is having a baby!

What should I use - Pads or tampons?

- Pads are made of absorbent material to soak up the blood so that you don't have an embarrassing leak.
- Pads nowadays come in all sizes and thicknesses so that there will be one which is most comfortable for you.
- Pads have a sticky strip, which will stick to your pants and stop them from sliding around.
- Some of them have 'wings' which stick to the side of your pants for extra protection.
- Remember to change pads about every 4 hours and be careful about washing your hands afterwards.
- Pads should never be put down the toilet as they could block the pipes.
- **Look for a sanitary disposal unit in school and public toilets or wrap the pad in toilet paper or a paper bag and put it into the bin.**
- **Ask mum what she does with**

pads at home.



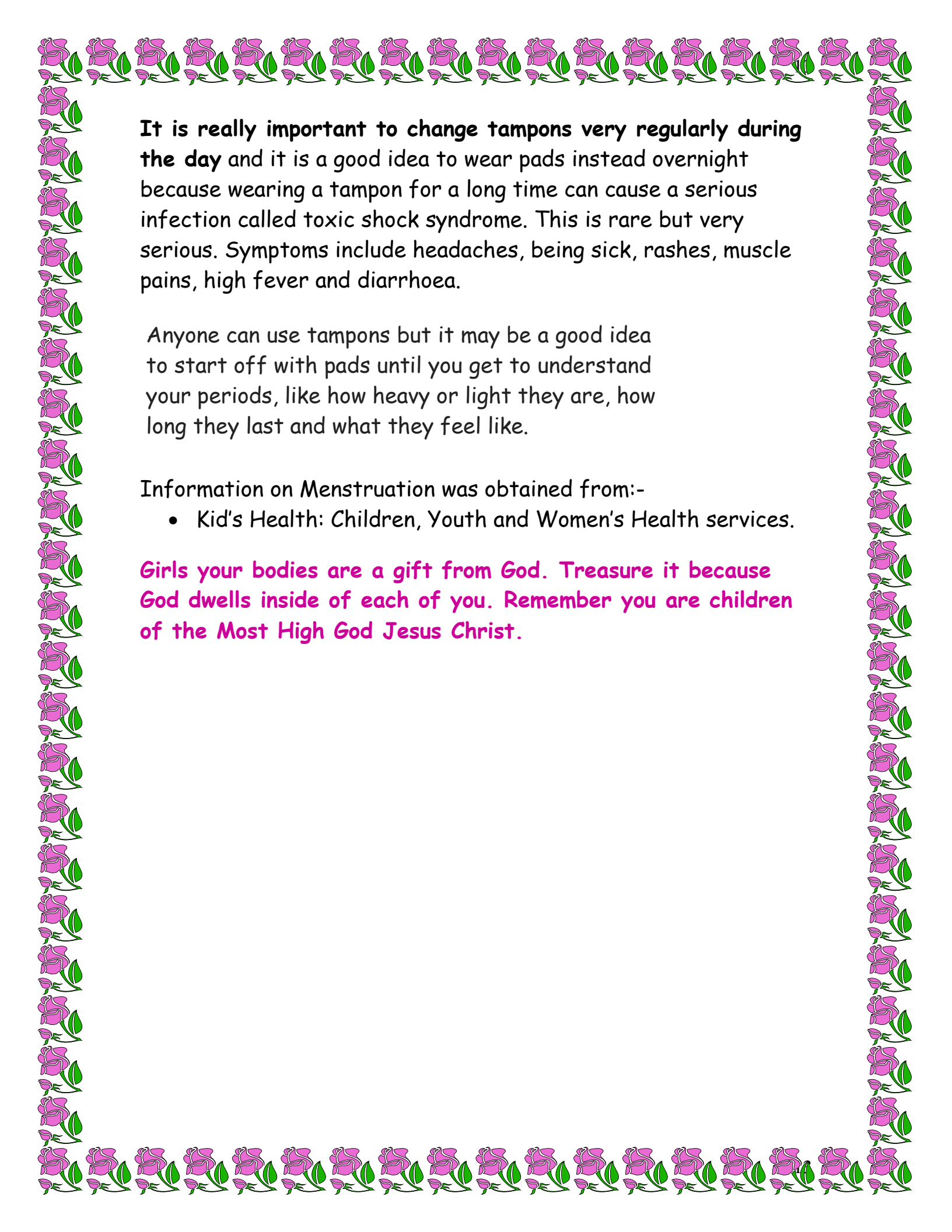
You can ask mum, an older sister, auntie or female teacher if you are worried about what kind of pads to use or about wearing tampons.

All women menstruate so they will be able to help you.

- If you have just started your periods and you are not regular yet, you may want to carry a pad with you in your back-pack. Some girls wear a panty liner when they know it is nearly time. You don't have to wear panty liners or pads when you are not having a period.

Tampons: -

- They are useful to wear when playing sport or swimming.
- They are small to carry about and because they are inside your body they are less likely to have an odor even on hot days.
- They have a string on the end so that you can get them out easily. You can't 'lose' a tampon inside you.
- Read the directions on the packet and you shouldn't have any problems, but many young girls find tampons tricky to put in when they first try using them.



It is really important to change tampons very regularly during the day and it is a good idea to wear pads instead overnight because wearing a tampon for a long time can cause a serious infection called toxic shock syndrome. This is rare but very serious. Symptoms include headaches, being sick, rashes, muscle pains, high fever and diarrhoea.

Anyone can use tampons but it may be a good idea to start off with pads until you get to understand your periods, like how heavy or light they are, how long they last and what they feel like.

Information on Menstruation was obtained from:-

- Kid's Health: Children, Youth and Women's Health services.

Girls your bodies are a gift from God. Treasure it because God dwells inside of each of you. Remember you are children of the Most High God Jesus Christ.