

# Smile!

**FIND A MIRROR** and smile at yourself—your best and biggest toothy grin. You probably don't spend much time thinking about your teeth unless you have to go to the dentist. But teeth are just as interesting as they are important. Your teeth aren't just for chewing your food. They also help you form sounds when you speak and make your smile uniquely yours!

## Types of Teeth

Your first set of 20 teeth are called primary or baby teeth. These fall out as your permanent set of 32 teeth grows in. Whatever age you are, you will notice that the teeth in your smile don't all look the same. We have four different types of teeth designed to do different jobs.

The middle front teeth (four on the top and four on the bottom) are incisors. These are for biting and cutting. Next to the incisors you'll see longer, more pointed teeth that are used for tearing food. These are called canines because they look a bit like a dog's fangs. The next teeth are premolars, which are used for crushing. The teeth at the back of the mouth are molars. Their name comes from the Latin word *mola*, meaning "millstone." Molars grind food like millstones grind wheat.



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## Now That's a Smile!

Here are just a few examples of the amazing teeth found in the animal world:

- » An opossum has 50 teeth, including 18 incisors.
- » Many plant-eating animals, including cows, sheep, and giraffes, don't have upper incisors at all. They use their lips and tongues and their thick, hard gums to grab and tear grass, leaves, and twigs.
- » The teeth of the crabeater seal are shaped like Christmas trees! They

look rather scary but are used to filter krill out of seawater.

- » Sharks definitely have the toothiest smile. Their teeth are constantly being lost and replaced in a sort of tooth conveyor belt system. The requiem shark has a few hundred teeth at a time and might grow and shed an estimated 30,000 teeth over its lifetime!

## Reason to Smile

The Bible tells of the Lord's goodness to his people throughout history and promises good things yet to come for those who trust in him.

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dreamed.  
Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
our tongues with songs of joy.  
Then it was said among the nations,  
"The LORD has done great things for them."  
The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy.

—Psalm 126:1-3

Those who call the Lord their God have good reason to smile! 📖