A MARVELOUS MUSCLE

Inside your chest, is the strongest and toughest muscle in your body. This marvelous muscle is your heart. The heart is special because its job is to pump blood to every part of your body. Why is blood so important? God tells us, "...for the blood is the life..." (Deuteronomy 12:23.) Blood carries the oxygen and food that your body needs to live. Blood also picks up items that your body doesn’t need and takes it to those parts of your body that get rid of waste (lungs, kidneys and liver). Amazingly, your heart does this all day...all night...all the time — without you ever having to think about it!

Your heart is surprisingly small, considering what a hard worker it is. Shaped like an upside-down pear (not a Valentine!) the heart is about the size of your fist. The heart grows in size as you grow.

Your heart is like two pumps joined together. There are four chambers, or open spaces like rooms, inside the heart. Two of these chambers are located at the bottom of the heart. They are called the left ventricle (ven-trak-lul) and right ventricle. The other two chambers are located at the top. They are called the left atrium (at-re-um) and the right atrium.

Before each beat, your heart fills with blood, then its muscles squeeze and relax to push the blood along. Blood is pushed from the atrium into the ventricle on each side of the heart.

Between them are small valves (like doors). These valves all work to keep the blood flowing forward. They open up to let the blood move ahead and then they close quickly to keep the blood from flowing backward.

The left side of your heart receives blood from the lungs that is high in oxygen. It then pushes it out to the rest of the body.

What causes your heart to "beat" or "pump"? Located on your heart is a small patch called the sinus node. About every 8/10th of a second, it sends an electrical current to special nerves that make the heart muscles squeeze or contract.

From the moment we were growing in our mother’s womb, until our death, our hearts never stops pumping. The heart is one “busy machine.” Machines don’t happen by chance and accident, they are designed by intelligence. The human heart points to an intelligent designer and that could only be God!

FANTASTIC HEART FACTS

- Beats 90 times a minute in a child and 70 times in an adult.
- Can beat 150 to 189 times a minute during exercise.
- Pumps blood to every cell in your body in 60 seconds or less!
- Beats about 100,000 times a day, or 40 million times a year.
- Pumps about 1,800 to 2,000 gallons of blood a day (enough to fill over 40 bathtubs!). That's about 680,000 gallons a year!
- Can squirt a stream of blood about 10 feet into the air!
- In one hour, can make enough energy to lift a medium-sized car 3 feet off the ground!
Although the heart is the muscle that pumps blood through your body, the Bible shows the word “heart” can also mean your spirit or who you are. For example, the heart can be wise, pure, wicked, good, prideful, etc. Today, the heart is also used to show love. Can you match words or phrases in the Valentine heart shapes with their meanings in the rectangular boxes? Answers below.

WORD-FILL: Use the following words found in "A Marvelous Heart" to solve the puzzle. Two letters are shown to help get you started.

HEART
SINUS NODE
CHAMBERS
VENTRICLE
ATRIUM
ARTERIES
VEINS
BLOOD
VESSELS
DESIGNER
MUSCLE

ANSWERS