

Family Is God's Idea

Dear Facilitator: This lesson begins in Genesis 2 and 3 where God created the world, including the first family.

Since this is the first session, you might want to help your families feel comfortable with one another by doing an activity that introduces each family member.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Explain that God created the idea of family.
2. Demonstrate the importance of getting to know each family member.

We are praying that God will help you as you prepare the lesson. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** We are so glad that you have joined us and want you to know that God loves you! Your presence here speaks volumes about how much you value your family!

During the next few weeks, we will learn more about who we are as families, how we can support one another, and what we as families should hope for in the future.

Together we will learn how to nurture our families into loving units where each family member belongs and grows. This includes the extended family and those who are invited by parents to come along side to encourage your families' growth.

 **Say:** Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain that God created the idea of family.
2. Demonstrate the importance of getting to know each family member.

Introduction *5 minutes*

God originated the idea of family in the very first book of the Bible—the book of Genesis. When God created Adam and Eve, He created the first family and put them in just the right place to live and grow.

In the second and third chapters of Genesis, we find the description of God's idea of family and how it all started.

As we read further, we see that even though there were problems that arose in families (e.g. Cain and Abel), God's grace was at work redeeming families.

God still extends His grace to families today and wants us to understand that He loves us and our families in whatever situation we may find ourselves.



Share: At this point, you should share an example on how you or someone you know experienced God's grace and provision for a family.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As we eat this meal, we'd like to have you talk about your family.

1. What do you like about your family and why?
2. Who are some of the people you consider to be part of your family and why?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

<i>40 minutes</i>	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Identity</i>	FAMILY IS GOD'S IDEA

I've often wondered if there is some way to be a great parent in training my children. God started the first family and gave parents the job of training and teaching their children. This may seem like an overwhelming job, since none of our children came with instructions.

As parents, we appreciate our children, and we want to spend time with them. Parenting isn't always easy, but you are here because you care deeply about your families and want to do your very best!

As parents, it is very important to get to know our children and figure out what makes them tick.

We can know our children better by spending time with them, encouraging them, and communicating with them. We can also ask God and others to help us along the way.

In a few minutes, we will be sharing examples of how we can spend time, encourage, and talk to our children.

Family is God's idea!

As we think about teaching and training our children, let's start by talking about the joys and challenges of parenting.

Ask parents to write down one joy and one challenge relating to parenting. Have them share their answers with the group at their table (or with the whole group if you have 15 or fewer participants).

The joys and challenges of parenting help us discover ways to better understand and know our children. Again, we can do this by spending time with them, encouraging them, and talking with them.

DISCUSS

Let's discuss a few questions and discover some insights from you as parents on how these might help you to get to know your children better.

(This activity will help parents connect with one another as they share their parenting joys and challenges with other parents. As you listen to the responses, point out that these are opportunities to get to know your children better. Write the ideas on a chalkboard/whiteboard.)

- If you could set up a perfect day with your kids, what would you do?
- If you had a completely free day, how would you spend it?
- What is something about your kids that makes you proud of them?
- What are some ways you could reduce interruptions when you are with your children?
- What words would you use to praise efforts and identify success in your children?

You created a great list of practical ideas to know and encourage your children. This week, study your children, try some of the activities, enlist others to help you, and remember, "Family is God's idea!"

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material today during our short time together. Our objectives were to:

1. Explain that God created the idea of family.
2. Demonstrate the importance of getting to know each family member.

Use the closing time to ask participants for their feedback about the evening. Below are a couple of questions that may be used or adjusted to fit the evening. It's important for different learning styles to be able to summarize, give feedback, or share ideas. You will begin next week's session by asking participants to share something they've tried or



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Genesis 2:18

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number."

Psalms 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

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what made a positive difference in their families during the week.

Encourage parents to be wise builders and role models.

Children may be invited back to the session to end the evening with worship and/or prayer for each family.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What impressed you about your role as a parent and God's idea of families?

QUOTE TO SHARE

"Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently providing a happy home atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives. The wise parent realizes that every day the building blocks are being laid for the child's future."

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Identity

FAMILY IS GOD'S IDEA

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of why they were created.
- Help children be aware of the reason God created family.
- Help children be aware of the blessings and benefits of belonging in a family.
- Help children be aware of the roles and responsibilities of family members.

We are going to have some fun spending time together and learning about why God created families.

Family is people who love you, protect you, and support you while you grow to be the person that God created you to be.

God created the entire universe and everything in it! He wanted to make a wonderful place for people to live. His plan was to create people who would love Him, worship Him, and serve Him by demonstrating His love by being good stewards over the earth and the people in the earth.

God decided He would bless the earth by putting a special gift inside of each child born to make the world a better place.

When God finished creating the heavens and earth, He was very pleased! He knew that it was a perfect place to live for the people He created.

Then He created a man and named him Adam. After God created Adam, God said it was not good for Adam to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Adam needed someone to love him, support him, and care for him. So, God created Adam's wife, Eve, so they could be a family. God was so excited about His creation. He said it was very good! Adam and Eve became the first two people to form a family. God gave Adam and Eve the responsibility to have many children and to fill the earth with people. He wanted Adam and Eve to teach them to love and honor Him (Genesis 1:28). Soon

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God blessed them with two sons to add to their family (Psalm 127:3).

God forewarned Adam and Eve that they would sometimes experience problems and challenges in addition to the good times they experienced as a family. He told them that with the love and support of family, they would be able to solve problems, overcome obstacles, and make it through those difficult times.

Look around the room. Just think... God created everyone in this room for a specific reason and purpose.

He thought about you before you were even in your mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). He needed you to be born to bring a special gift to the world that only you could bring. Therefore, He put that gift inside of you, created you, and caused you to be born. God's plan for you is to have a loving relationship with Him and to grow into a healthy, wise, and compassionate person who shows His love and serves Him by using the gift He placed inside of you.

Just like with Adam, God didn't want you to be alone. He knew you would need people in your life to love you, support you, and care for you... your family! He knew you needed to be in a nurturing environment where you could discover your gift, begin to develop it, and use it to be a blessing to others. You needed parents to teach you the necessary information and lessons you would need to know to grow up to become who God wants you to be (Proverbs 22:6).

Families are close to God's heart! Because God loves us so much, He made sure each one of us would belong to a family. He designed all families to be different, and every person's family was selected especially for them.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about why they were created.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God gave us families.
- Talk about what it would be like if we didn't belong to a family.
- Talk about what we like about belonging to a family.
- Talk about parent and children's roles and responsibilities in their family.
- Talk about how children can be a blessing to their parents and others in their family.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is for young children. Another is focused on ages 4-11. The third is for older children ages 12-16.

YOUNG CHILDREN

Have them draw a picture of their family and tell something they like about their family.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Pencils, markers, and crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/TqulKel9qDE>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Have children write a free verse poem about their family.

- Have each child write three to five sentences about something they like about their family.
- After they have written their sentences, put them in the best sounding order.

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- Write the sentences to form a poem, “What I like About My Family”.
- Have them share their poems.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencils, markers, and crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/TqulKel9qDE>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Have children work in a group to write a rap song about what they like about their family.

- First, have children collaborate to write four to six lines about “What I Like About My Family.”
- Next, have children put the lines in the best order.
- Finally, have the children tap the beat on the table top adding the words.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE A BLESSING
TO YOUR PARENTS AND TO OTHERS
IN YOUR FAMILY?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION
THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I was created to be
a blessing!*

Individual Identity

Dear Facilitator: In this session, we will focus on how each member of the family is created special by God. Psalm 139:13-16 says that we are wonderfully made.


As your families begin to understand how much God loves them, you will want to encourage them by explaining how God wants them to believe in and follow Him!

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Recognize that all family members are valuable because God created and loves them.
2. Practice helping others build a healthy self-concept.

Blessings

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Last week we discussed that families are God's idea, and parents have the responsibility to get to know their children.


Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family? Are you willing to share? We want to celebrate with you.

As we build on the idea that family is God's idea, we are going to talk today about how families are made up of unique individuals.

Today we want you to recognize that all family members are valuable because God created and loves them.

Second, we want each person to practice helping others build a healthy self-concept.

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Object Lesson:** (Fan out a stack of different colored paper.) Let's look at these different colors of paper. They all fit neatly into a stack, but each one is also different!

This is kind of like our families. We are each unique (like the different colors), and yet we each belong in our family (the stack of paper).

As we eat, we'd like you to talk about what makes each member of your family special.

Family & Table Talk *20 minutes*

We've written the questions on the whiteboard or printed them on cards at your table for you to discuss and enjoy.

1. Parents: Share something about each of your children that makes them unique and special.
2. Children: Share something about your parents that makes them unique and special.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
Identity	INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

I've often wondered why it's so difficult to believe the good things that people say about me or what God says about me. Have you ever wondered about this?

Tonight, the focus is on knowing that you and your children are loved and valuable.

Psalm 139:13-16 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God saw us before we were born and knew what we would be like.

You're valuable because God created and loves you. It is easy to get the wrong idea about who you are. Sometimes people say nice things about us, and other times we get criticized or hear negative things.

Sometimes we are influenced by what we see on TV or in the movies.

It can be very confusing, so it's important to know who you are. The Bible says that we are loved by God.

You are valuable to God. To demonstrate this, I'm going to give a one dollar bill to one of you, but first, let me do this... (Facilitator crumples up the bill into a small ball and holds it up again). Now, who wants this?

Well, what if I do this... (Drop the wadded-up bill on the floor and step on it, and then hold it up again). Now, who still wants this even after it's been through so much?

Here is the valuable lesson: No matter what I did with the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It is still worth one dollar.

Many times in our lives, we may feel that we've been dropped, crumpled, and walked on by the decisions we make and by the circumstances that come our way in life. We may feel that we are worthless; however, understand that no matter what happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value to God.

Parents: Your child's first experience of God's unconditional love is you.

How can you show love to children even when they are "crumbled"?



Scripture SUPPORT

Jeremiah 1:5

*Before I formed you in the womb
I knew you, before you were born
I set you apart; I appointed you
as a prophet to the nations.*

Genesis 1:26

*Then God said, "Let us make
mankind in our image, in our
likeness, so that they may rule
over the fish in the sea and the
birds in the sky, over the livestock
and all the wild animals, and
over all the creatures that move
along the ground."*

2 Corinthians 5:17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
the new creation has come: The
old has gone, the new is here!*

1 John 3:1

*See what great love the Father
has lavished on us, that we
should be called children of God!*

Each of you is loved and valued by God, and it's within the family that we begin to understand how God values and loves us. As good parents, we want to help our children build a healthy understanding about who they are.

DISCUSS

(Ask the following question and write it on a chalkboard/whiteboard.)

- Does anyone have an example you would be willing to share about how you struggled with believing that God loves and values you and how you overcame that struggle?

We need to teach children who they are in God—valuable but in need of Christ.

The Bible tells us that God created us, values us, and wants us to be His children. It's our choice to accept Him or not.

When you choose to follow Christ, you become part of God's family in a new way. Consider where you want to be and make your choices based on the results you wish to see. You are valuable because God created you and loves you.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in this lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Recognize that all family members are valuable because God created and loves them.
2. Practice helping others build a healthy self-concept.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Objectives

- Help children to be aware that God created each person to be unique.
- Help children to be aware that each family member has a unique, individual identity.
- Help children to be aware of how they can receive a special identity as a child of God.
- Help children to be aware of who the Holy Spirit is.
- Help children to be aware of the gifts they receive as a child of God.

Did you know that as children of God we have two identities? Today we are going to talk about your individual identity and a very special identity you can have when you ask God's Son, Jesus, to be in your life. Every detail about you is important to God. Your identity as a unique person is all the ways you are different from other people. God says He thought about you and planned everything about you.

In the Bible God said that before He created you, He knew everything about you (Jeremiah 1:5). For instance, when God created you, He was very specific about what He wanted you to look like. He decided your eye color, your hair color, your skin color, your height, the way you talk, and what you like to

eat. Those are just a few of the many things that make you unique. No one in this world has the same fingerprints as you do. Also, God has placed a special gift inside you to bring to the earth, and your gift is different from anyone else's. No one can do the work God created you to do as well as you can.

God wanted each person He created to be like no one else. Even in your family, no two people are alike—not even your parents, you, or your siblings. God places each person in a family that is just right for them. That's what is so beautiful about each family!

In the Bible it says that when God created Adam and Eve, He decided it would be good to make them in His likeness (Genesis

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1:26). Even though all of God's children were created to be unique, He also wanted them to have some things about them that were like Him. God wants us to imitate who He is to other people by loving them and caring for them. This way others will see a glimpse of what God is like because of our actions.

God also wanted to have a special family of His own children so that He could fellowship with them. This is where a second identity becomes available. We get this special, second identity when we ask Christ to be our personal Savior. When you ask Jesus to be in charge of your life, you become a child of God, a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). God adopts you into His very own family, calls you His child, and gives you the most wonderful welcome gift that you can imagine—the Holy Spirit!

When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, He causes us to think and act like God and become like Him. The Holy Spirit comes to help us to love and honor Jesus, to teach us to choose right over wrong, to encourage us to praise and worship God, to give us courage to witness for Christ, and to help us understand the Bible and do what it tells us to do. We also can enjoy other good things God gives us that come with the gift of the Holy Spirit like His love, joy, peace, and strength!

When God finished His creation of man and woman, He called them His masterpiece—His greatest work, His showpiece! God's creation of man and woman was His favorite part of creation because He was creating them to be in a very special relationship with Him. Each one of us has our own personal identity, and when we have Christ in our life, we also have an even more important and powerful identity in Christ! So, no matter how many times we have failed or made mistakes, and no matter what we or others say or think about ourselves, our identity as a child of God is the truth about us. God says we are forgiven and a new creation.

God values us and lets us know it in His Word. In the Bible He calls you His chosen, beloved child. The Bible

says that God delights in you and will never leave you alone or turn His back on you. He says you are bold and victorious and have a bright future ahead of you. God has set you apart to do a very special job for Him. He created us to bestow His great love upon us (1 John 3:1). In return, we can bring Him pleasure by loving, praising, worshipping, and working for Him to make the world a better place.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in discussion about their individual identity.
- Lead children in discussion about how they can have a second identity as a child of God.
- Lead children in discussion about the gifts made available to children of God through a new identity in Christ Jesus.
- Lead children in a discussion of how the Holy Spirit helps us.
- Lead children in discussion of what God says about children of God.

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Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Identity Web Worksheet

Pencils, markers, or crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/hsDQEb-qlyM>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children create an Identity Web (see handout with example).
- First, tell them to complete the "Self-Description Web."
- Next, have them complete the "Who God Says I Am" Web (Discuss).

AGES 12-16

Materials

Identity Web Worksheet

Pencils, markers, or crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/hsDQEb-qlyM>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children create an Identity Web (see handout with example).
- First tell them to complete the "Self-Description Web."
- Next have them do the "Who God Says I Am" Web (Discuss).



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I ACT LIKE THE PERSON THAT
GOD SAYS I AM?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



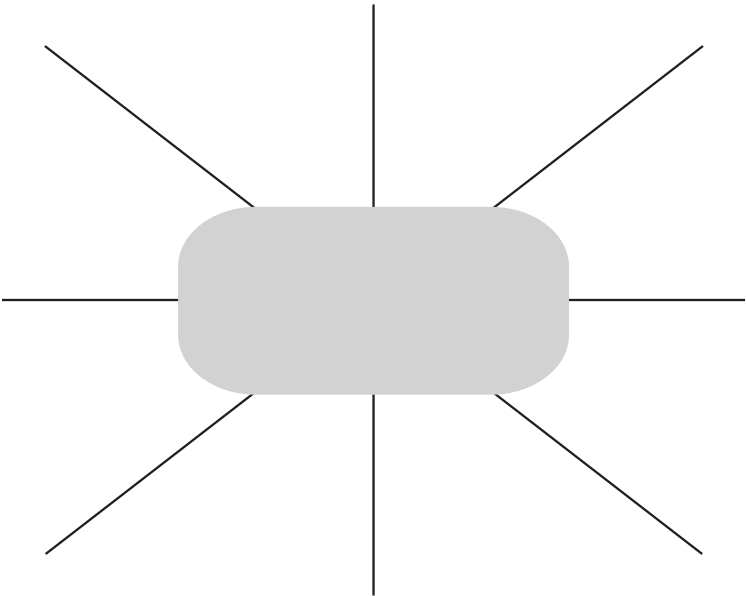
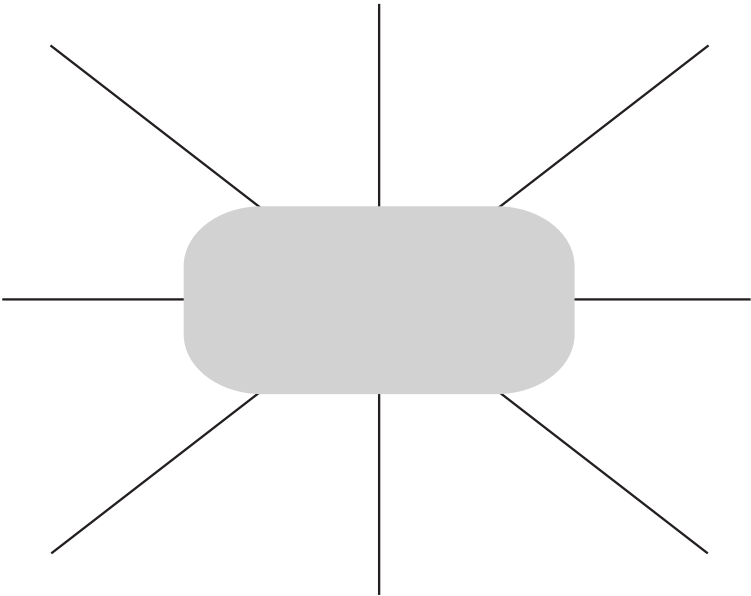
AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God says He made me
exactly like He wanted
me to be!*

Identity Web Worksheet

WHO GOD SAYS I AM

Write your (child's) name in the center of the box. What words do you use to describe who God says you are? Write those along each line coming from the center of the box.



SELF-DESCRIPTION

Write your (child's) name in the center of the box. What words do you use to describe yourself? Write those along each line coming from the center of the box.

Who We Are as a Family

Dear Facilitator: This lesson begins by sharing with parents the importance of helping families to realize their identity: qualities and beliefs that distinguish one family from another. A strong family identity benefits the children.

Psalm 103:17 says, “From everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children.” It is important to help your families know that God’s love is with them and the generations to come!

This lesson will help participants:


1. Discover ways to build their family.
2. Show their faith in God to their family.
3. Recognize what they value.

Each family has a unique identity. As families discover their values and understand their identity in Christ, they will grow in wisdom and gain strength to make it through the many circumstances of life.

We are praying that God will help you clearly communicate the importance of building a strong family identity. We hope that the families in your group will continue to grow in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Welcome 5 minutes


 **Say:** Last week we talked about individual identity and how God created each person unique. It is important to know who we are but to also know whose we are.

It is important to know who we are as individuals, but it is also important to know what your family values are. These values can then be passed down to future generations.

Psalm 103:17 says, “From everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children.”

 **Share:** To help illustrate this, I have a story I would like to share with you about my unique family identity. (Share a story.)

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** We are so glad you are back as we continue to learn and talk about what makes our families unique and special.

God wants us to build strong families and understand what makes each of our families different.

There are some practical ways to help build a strong family identity:

1. When you are with your family, do not get distracted by the phone, the computer, or other people.
2. Play with your children.
3. Share your faith in God with your children.

Since each family is different, what are one or two words that best describe your family? (Share in groups at the table or as a large group.) There were quite a few different words mentioned. Just as every family is different, we also have different values. Values are your family’s ideas or strong personal

beliefs about what is important and what is not, what is good and what is bad, and what is right and what is wrong.

Knowing what your family values will help you make wise decisions.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

We've written the questions on the whiteboard or on printed on cards at your table for you to discuss and enjoy.

- Share your favorite family traditions and rituals. Why do you like them?
- What rituals or traditions do you not want to give up?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalms 103:17

*Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise
his holy name.*

Proverbs 29:18

*Where there is no revelation,
people cast off restraint; but
blessed is the one who heeds
wisdom's instruction.*

Psalms 133:1

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together
in unity!*

Proverbs 22:6

*Start children off on the way they
should go, and even when they
are old they will not turn from it.*

Ephesians 6:1

*Children obey your parents
in the LORD, for this is right.*

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Identity	WHO WE ARE AS A FAMILY

Say: As we mentioned earlier, we have identified three ways that you can build a strong family identity. This can be done by being present with your children, playing together as a family, and talking about your faith so that your children develop a heart for God.

Let's discuss a few practical ideas that will help us.

DISCUSS

Ask the following questions and write them on a chalkboard/whiteboard.

- What are some ways that you can "be there" for your family?
- What are ways that you can have fun together as a family?
- What do you celebrate in your family?
- How would you begin to talk about faith with your children?

Our behaviors reflect our values. Remember, values are your family's ideas or strong beliefs that you think are important to live by. Today we will figure out our values.

1. Look at the list we are distributing and think about what you would like others to remember about your family.
2. Check the phrases that seem to fit your family.
3. Circle three of the phrases you checked that are the most important to you.

I hope that you were able to discover a few of your family's values.

Challenge: This week talk with your family at home about your top three values and discuss how you would like others to remember your family.

Also, how do your values impact your decisions and choices as a family?

Personal Example: One of my family values is... It affected my family or family decisions in this way...

Being present your children, playing with them, and sharing your faith with your family will begin to build a strong family identity. Knowing your values will build on those experiences by helping you make decisions about how to live your life. Remember: Your family is one of God's gifts to you, and together you are special.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material today during our time together.

Our objectives were to:

1. Discover ways to build your family.
2. Show your faith in God to your family.
3. Recognize what you value.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Identity

WHO WE ARE AS A FAMILY

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of their family values.
- Help children to be aware that our Christian values help us make good decisions and choices.
- Help children to be aware of their need to have a vision for their life.
- Help children to be aware of ways for their family to become stronger.
- Help children to be aware that they have a responsibility to help their family vision become a reality.

Do you think it is important to tell the truth? Did you know that telling the truth is a value you learned from your parents?

Today we are going to spend time talking about “values.” Values are ideas, beliefs, or standards that we think are important to live by. Values help us decide what is important and what is not important. Values also help us make good choices and wise decisions.

As we grow from children to adults within our families, each one of us is learning to believe in a set of values that our parents feel are important. Every family must decide what is important to them and what standards they want to live by. Parents use their values to create a vision for themselves,

their children as individuals, and their family. Just as with individuals, each family must choose the message they want to give the world about who they are and what they believe in. God has individually created and gifted each family with an identity that can be used to influence others around them.

As Christians, our values are based on the message in the Bible. Our belief in Christ Jesus should guide us in deciding the values we will live by.

A strong family identity begins with parents knowing God and passing good values on to their children (Psalm 103:17). Some of the ways a family can become stronger is by spending more time together, celebrating

birthdays and other events, going to church, praying and worshipping as a family, and learning and talking about the lessons in the Bible together.

At some point, every family will have trouble, but by building strong family values and an identity in Christ, your family will have the strength to make it through the challenging times.

Because we are in the family of God, the Bible already lists some important values that God wants us to practice. Some of those important values are love, compassion, kindness, service, honesty, giving, and hope. These are just a few. I'm sure you can name other important values the Bible teaches us.

The Bible also tells us about something called "vision." It explains that without a vision for our lives, we will not be successful (Proverbs 29:18). Each person should have a vision for their life, and every family should have a vision as well. Vision is what you want your family to be like when it becomes the best it can be.

Every member of the family must share the vision for the family and do their part to make the vision become a reality. A vision for your family helps family members remember that God brought them together for a specific purpose. A vision helps you remember why God created your unique family and what your family is trying to accomplish for Him. As your family plays together and prays together, God will show you purpose for your family.

Then as a family, your values guide you to make the right decisions to help your vision of a meaningful, prosperous life come true—a life pleasing to God!

Your family is one of God's gifts to you, and together you are very special. No two families are alike. Christian families have the responsibility of choosing and practicing values that honor God. And it honors God to see members of a family live together and work together in peace, love, and unity (Psalm 133:1). God is pleased when your family makes a positive impact in the community and in the world for Him. (Ephesians 6:1).

Notes

Notes

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about values—what are they?
- Lead children in a discussion about some values they have been taught to believe in.
- Ask children to name three important values their family believes in.
- Ask children how they show the values they believe in by their actions.
- Talk to the children about what vision means.
- Ask the children what vision they have for their life. Discuss.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Poster paper

Markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/PT-HBI2TVtI>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children look at a list of values (See Value List on next page). Explain that our values are ideas or standards we believe in that are the most important to us.
- Have them pick three values that are most important to their family. Then out of the three, have them pick the one that is most important to them.
- Have them write in big letters on a piece of 8 x 11 poster paper their most important value. Allow children to share the most important value they selected and why.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencil or markers

Have children view YouTube:

“Be the Change” at https://youtu.be/Z8oJV_mBY9g

- Briefly discuss.
- Our values determine our character. Make a list of the qualities you respect most about yourself.
- Pick two of them and write about why you respect those qualities and how you think they will help you impact your home, school, community, and the world now and as you grow up.
- Have children share with the group if they are willing.

Notes

Notes

Values List

The following list is an example of values for kids that you might include on your own list. These values are not in any order. Feel free to add to the list.

- **Honesty**
- **Integrity**
- **Kindness**
- **Empathy**
- **Thankfulness**
- **Curiosity**
- **Respect**
- **Imagination**
- **Hard work**
- **Perseverance**
- **Faith**
- **Friendship**

Notice that imagination and curiosity are part of the list for values. Values are not only principles and standards. They are also what we consider important in our lives and would like to pass on to our children. Keep this in mind as you make your own list of values.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I PRACTICE THE VALUES
I BELIEVE IN EVERYDAY?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I represent my family
well by living the values
I have been taught!*

Your Family Is a Team

Dear Facilitator: During this lesson, you will have the opportunity to encourage families to be a team and show them how to build their team. It's important for your families to understand that teamwork involves a commitment including respecting one another, knowing each other's strengths and struggles, and connecting with one another.

The Bible passage you will be focusing on tonight is found in Colossians 3:14: "And over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity."

As you encourage families to be a team, this passage points to the importance of love and how love produces unity.


We are praying that God will use you to encourage families to be a team and to show families how to build their team through love which produces unity.


We hope that the families in your group will continue to grow in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes

Welcome *5 minutes*


 **Say:** Last week we discovered ways to build your family, ways to show your faith in God to your children, and ways to recognize what your family values.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


 **Say:** Today's teaching objectives are to:


1. Demonstrate how each family member can contribute to the team.
2. Discuss practical ways to respect one another, know each other's strengths and struggles, and connect with others in the home.
3. Illustrate how a family can work together as a team to help one another through the obstacles of life.

Introduction *5 minutes*


 **Say:** Families must choose to be a team and build a team. A family who works together builds a strong sense of belonging, which significantly benefits the children.

It's important to demonstrate how each family member can contribute to the team. This can be done by discussing practical ways to respect one another, by knowing each other's strengths and struggles, and by connecting with others in the home. It is also important to illustrate how a family can work together as a team to help one another through the obstacles of life.


 **Object Lesson:** The Family Treasure Chest (include items like a car, a house, money, food, and other items you have and need).

 **Say:** Let's take a look in this box and imagine it is a treasure chest that contains all of your family resources.


Describe how each family member uses the family treasure chest.

 **Ask:** What happens if all we do is take things out?

Explain that eventually the treasure chest will be empty, so even though we all take from the family treasure chest, we all must also add to the chest.

 **Say:** We are talking about some everyday ways that families make it enjoyable to be together — like giving a smile, a thank you, a helping hand, a hello, or a song,

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** We've written the questions on the whiteboard or on printed on cards at your table for you to discuss and enjoy.

1. What is one thing you can do to contribute to your family treasure chest?
2. How does your contribution to your family build the family team?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes



What difference would it make in your family if everyone began to work and play together as a team that wanted to win?

Being a team takes work. Sometimes we need the help of others. As parents, you are the leaders and role models of your home. You have the opportunity and responsibility to find other adults to help you along the way.

We need others, and we need God’s help.

Tonight, we want to encourage you to be a team with your spouse and/or the other adult leaders in your household.

Teamwork involves respecting one another, knowing each other’s strengths and struggles, and connecting with others. This is how you begin to be a team. Teamwork divides the work and multiplies the success.

As you guide your family team, you will create a sense of belonging and safety for one another as you experience all of life’s ups and downs.

The Bible says in Colossians 3:14, “And over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

In other words, make love your priority. Love is what pulls everything together and produces unity. As you respect one another, understand one another and spend time together, with a loving spirit, you will be unified a parents and families and become a team.

Let’s talk about some practical ways that you can be a team.

DISCUSS

(Ask the following questions and write them on a chalkboard/whiteboard).

- What are some ways that we can show love and respect to the other adult leaders in our homes?
- How does knowing each other's strengths and struggles help us work together as a team?
- What are some ways we can connect with others who co-parent with us?

It takes work and determination to build your team. It is important for children to see that adults respect each other.

Think back to the treasure chest and consider the things we take out and add every day. This is a great example of how we build unity and learn to trust each other.

ACTIVITY

Obstacle Course: Sometimes we face obstacles. We are going to play a game that will illustrate this point.

This obstacle course can be played indoors with already established obstacles or create your own with chairs and other items.

1. Ask for two volunteers and blindfold one of them. The person without the blindfold will verbally guide the partner successfully through the obstacle course by explaining how to get through without falling or tripping over the obstacles. Encourage the participants to try different things to help the partner get from start to finish.
2. Having two sets of partners going through the course at the same time will increase the distractions by having more than one person talking at once. It is okay to have people watch, and when they are done, debrief.

Notes

Notes

DISCUSS

- How much did you trust your partner (on a scale of 1-10) at the start?
- How much did you trust your partner (on a scale of 1-10) at the end?
- What is the difference between navigating the course alone and being guided by another?
- What was needed to trust and work with someone else?
- What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure?
- What worked best?
- On your worst day as a family, who do you trust enough to call and tell them what is going on?

SUMMARY

Your family is facing obstacles every day, and if we try to walk alone, we can lose our way, stumble, and run into more problems.

- God is always there to help us navigate the obstacles of life and so is our family, the gift that God has given us.
- It is our responsibility to build up our team in unity through love and help guide each one through life's obstacles.
- Remember: Teamwork divides the work and multiplies the success.

We covered a lot of material today during our short time together. Our objectives were to:

1. Demonstrate how each family member can contribute to the team.
2. Discuss practical ways to respect one another, know each other's strengths and struggles, and connect with others in the home.
3. Illustrate how a family can work together as a team to help one another through the obstacles of life.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Identity

YOUR FAMILY IS A TEAM

Objectives

- Help children be aware that God created their family to be a team.
- Help children be aware that a family team helps each member practice their God-given gifts.
- Help children be aware that a family team creates a training camp environment.
- Help children be aware that a family team helps each member grow stronger in service to God.
- Help children be aware that families who work as a team bring out the best in one another.
- Help children be aware that adults in the family are role models and set expectations.

We have learned that God created man and woman and made them a family. God created every person to be born into a family, so they would have a place to belong and people to care for them. But did you know there is another reason God created families? God created a family to be a team. A family team is a group of people with different skills, gifts, and tasks who God organized to work together for Him.

Being a family team means respecting one another and knowing each other's strengths

and struggles. Team members must be committed to working with each other and connecting with each other. Being a member of a family team requires you to learn to love each other through good and bad times. The Bible says, "Even more than all this, clothe yourself in love. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:14).

Within a Christian family, there are parents, siblings, and sometimes others who have different skills, gifts, abilities, and jobs. They work together as a team on a common goal

of serving God. Each one of us was created with a special gift that God placed inside of us. God knew that we would need people in our lives to help us develop and improve these gifts. In order for you perfect the gift God placed inside of you, you would also need your family to be your team and your training camp—your cheering section (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

A training camp is a place where you practice, grow strong, and prepare for a special task or job. Your family team creates a training camp environment where each member can grow and prepare to use their special gifts to make a positive impact in the world (Proverbs 22:6).

Everyone in the family needs to take care of one another! As a family team, we learn each other's weaknesses and strengths and their likes and dislikes. We learn to spend time communicating our thoughts, ideas, opinions, and feelings, and we spend time having fun and enjoying being together. Sometimes it's the everyday things like giving a smile, saying thank you, or lending a helping hand that helps show love to other family members. God wants you to think of what you can do to care for the other members of your family team (Philippians 2:4).

Parents are the family team's coaches. They model respect and are responsible for deciding the values of the team. Children team members have the responsibility to learn and practice the values parents are modeling for them. Family team members are always challenging each other to be the very best person they can be! When a family loves, protects, and nurtures each member, it pleases God!

At times, just like on a sports team when a member is experiencing a problem or not giving full effort, the family team gives a member the support, encouragement, and correction to solve the problem (Galatians 6:2). Then, that family team member is expected to get back on track to reaching his or her personal goals as well as playing a part in accomplishing the family team's goals.

Notes

Notes

DISCUSS

- Lead children in discussion about what they know about teams.
- Lead children in discussion about expectations for team members.
- Lead children in discussion about the definition of a training camp.
- Lead children in a discussion about how living with a family team is like being in a training camp.
- Lead children in discussion about how their family acts like a team.
- Lead children in discussion about how their family team is helping them become the person God created them to be.
- Lead children in discussion of how they can be a good team member and help their family team work well together.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Any type of large sheet paper
Markers/crayons
Timer

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/y5EFsZpTanY>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

The Factory Game: The instructor should tell the children they are going to play a game called “The Factory Game.” Have the kids sit in a circle. Then, set the paper in front of the person you would like to start this game. Tell the kids that they will be “working at a factory” where they will be drawing as many stick figures as they possibly can in three minutes. Assign each child a body part to draw onto the stick figure.

(For example: feet, arm, head, eyes, hair, etc.) Make sure that major body parts like body, arms, head, etc. come before accessories. For example, the person starting the game will need to be assigned the body. Set your timer for three minutes and see how many stick figures the children can create (with efficiency) in that time frame.

This game reflects on some of the important traits of a family with kingdom purpose, teamwork, dependence upon each other, and responsibility.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Medium-large balloon

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/y5EFsZpTanY>

Balloon Bop: The instructor should tell the children that they will be playing a game called “Balloon Bop.” Have the children stand in a circle holding hands. A balloon is dropped into the circle, and players see how many times they can tap the balloon in the air without losing connection (everyone in the circle must continue holding hands). This will require that the circle move and players work collaboratively as a team to keep the balloon in the air. Players may tap the balloon with their hands, arms, heads, shoulders, chest, knees, but NOT feet. If the balloon falls to the ground or is touched by feet, start the count over. Depending on the age level in the group, decide the number of taps of the balloon they need to reach. (Perhaps start with 10 taps.)

This game reflects on some of the important traits of a family with kingdom purpose, teamwork, dependence upon each other, and responsibility.

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING MY BEST AS A FAMILY
TEAM MEMBER?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I am an important part
of my family team!*

Hope for the Future

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have studied what it means to be a family and then uncovered strategies leading to healthy behaviors that reflect its values. We started in Genesis to see who we are, and now we are going back to Genesis at the end of this series to see what God's purpose is for our families.

In each legacy lesson, we will look at the "why" first and then the "what" and "how." If you know your purpose, or why God has put you here on this earth, then what you do and how you do it will be much easier to determine.

This week we will start with considering our hopes and dreams. It's important to encourage everyone to set aside past experiences and just spend a few moments considering their dreams. Why should we hope and dream? What are our hopes and dreams? How do we prepare to work toward achieving them? How will this impact the legacy we leave for our families, neighborhoods, communities, and world? These are questions we will consider first before we dive into more practical aspects of planning. We will finish with a final focus on your families' kingdom purpose.

The scripture for the lesson is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17: "May our LORD Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

God is for us and not against, and He has given us eternal encouragement and good hope through His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, this message should encourage our hearts and strengthen us in what we work to accomplish and in what we share with others. Encourage your group to ask God to show them what His dreams are for them too.

continued

Notes


Participants will:

1. Explain the source of hopes and dreams.
2. Identify hopes and dreams (tangible and intangible) individually and for the family.
3. Be inspired to continue to dream.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time learning about how families are created to be a team.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Today we are beginning our sessions on family legacy. We started in Genesis to see who we are, and during this series, we are going to end back in Genesis to see what God's purpose is for our families.

In each legacy lesson, we will look at the "why" first and then the "what" and "how." If you know your purpose, or why God has put you here on this earth,

then what you do and how you do it will be much easier to determine.


What about our hopes and dreams? Would understanding our hopes and dreams make a difference in our families, neighborhoods, and communities? If God has put hopes and dreams in all of our hearts, it implies that He has a purpose for our families. He will help us on our journey to discover those dreams.

Why should I have hopes and dreams? Because God has created me in His image and filled my heart with hopes and dreams to benefit others.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the source of hopes and dreams.
2. Identify hopes and dreams (tangible and intangible) individually and for the family.
3. Be inspired to continue to dream.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** We've written questions on the whiteboard or printed them on cards at your table for you to discuss and enjoy.

1. What is something people dream about or hope for?
2. Share something you dream about doing, being, or having. Also, share something you hope for.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes



99 Say: How many of you had plenty to discuss at dinner? Did you learn about any secret hopes and dreams from others in your family?

It's exciting to think that God has put these hopes and dreams in our hearts.

Tonight, we will begin with understanding "why" we should hope and dream, and then we will talk more about "what" we are hoping and dreaming for, and finally, "how" we can keep on dreaming and hoping and not give up.

Dr. King gave the "I Have a Dream" speech not the "I Have a Plan" speech. It's our dreams that change the course of history.

Dreamers are the ones who have the courage and creativity to see beyond "what is" to "what can be" to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Our hope as followers of Jesus Christ is found in Him alone, and He gives us the power to live our lives knowing that He is

the Hope of this world and is coming back someday to make everything right.

As we live our lives, and allow God to work in us, hope shows through our actions as we dream about the future.

It says in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, "May our LORD Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

God is for us not against us, and He has given us eternal encouragement and good hope through His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, this message should encourage our hearts and strengthen us in what we work to accomplish and in what we share with others.

DISCUSS

Why has God put hopes and dreams in our hearts?

(Facilitate a short discussion around this question. If your group needs help, encourage them to think back to how God has created them. We are created in the image of God with talents, abilities, and passions to do things for God and according to His purpose. We then can make a difference in our families, neighborhoods, communities, and world. This point is very important to emphasize. If we know the “why,” we will be better prepared to think about “what” we do and “how” we do it.)

What dreams has God put in your heart?

ACTIVITY

Tangible Versus Intangible worksheet

Provide each person with a copy of the worksheet from the end of the lesson.

Explain that tangible things are those we can see or touch, while intangible things are those that describe something we do or how we are.

Ask everyone to write down a few hopes and dreams in each category.

The following questions may be helpful:

1. What do I find myself thinking about or excited about? “I can’t wait to...”
2. Are there things you would like to change?
3. What do you wish was different in your life?
4. “Next year, I hope to be...”

Please note that we will be coming back to this next week, so make a copy that you keep or collect their paper at the end of the lesson.

DISCUSS

How will you keep on dreaming even when things don’t work out or you are disappointed or overwhelmed?



Scripture SUPPORT

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 71:5

For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.

Psalms 37:4

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Psalms 91:15

He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

Notes

- Are there things that keep you from dreaming or that shut down your hopes?
- How do you overcome obstacles?
- How could you trust in God and be thankful?
Does realizing God's timing is perfect help your perspective?

ACTIVITY

Neighbor Nudge

Each person should ask the other the following questions:

1. What is one of your hopes and dreams?
2. What would be an encouragement to you as you pursue your hopes and dreams this week?

After one minute, have the inner circle move to the next person to hear their answers and share their own. End the activity with prayer for the group.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain the source of hopes and dreams.
2. Identify hopes and dreams (tangible and intangible) individually and for the family.
3. Be inspired to continue to dream.

As we close, let's remember that leaving a strong family legacy will change our families, neighborhoods, and communities. It all begins with hopes and dreams. Why should we have hopes and dreams? God has created us in His image and has filled our hearts with hopes and dreams to benefit others and to make a difference in our world.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Legacy

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Objectives

- Help children be aware of the reasons we need hopes and dreams.
- Help children to think about their hopes and dreams.
- Help children be aware of the need for family hopes and dreams.
- Help children think about what motivates them to want to achieve.

This week we're going to spend time together talking about hopes and dreams! Did you know that the Bible tells us we need both hopes and dreams to live an enjoyable and satisfying life? The Bible says that God gives us hope. As Christians our hope is expecting God to be with us and do something good for us (Romans 15:13).

Psalm 71:5 says, "For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth." When you ask Jesus to be in your life, He gives you hope! God wants us to know that He loves us, and He is on our side. He tells us that He will give us hope and a good future. (Jeremiah 29:11). He has great plans for our lives!

Life can sometimes be difficult. As individuals and as families, we will experience failures and disappointments, but as children of God, we have been promised that God will be with us in times of trouble (Psalm 91:15). And that's why our dreams are important. Dreams are your goals and desires—the vision you have for your life. Our dreams inspire us and motivate us to keep moving forward through life's challenges. God's word tells us that to be successful, we must have a vision for our lives.

Without a vision, a person will have no focus and will not be able to achieve his or her dreams. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no revelation [vision], people

Notes

cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction."

God created each one of us with a very specific purpose in mind, and He puts the dreams in our hearts that will lead us through the experiences we must go through to achieve these dreams. As years go by and we learn and grow in our homes and schools and through various life lessons and experiences, we begin to discover what our gift areas may be. This causes us to start thinking about our lives and what kind of work we may want to do in the future. Year by year, we begin to create a vision for our lives and start setting goals to make our dreams become a reality.

Maybe you want to be a doctor, a teacher, a singer, a minister, or an airplane pilot. God knows the world will need people to fill these job positions, and He has a specific job in mind for you! God placed a gift in each person who is born, and He downloads the dreams into your heart to accomplish the purpose He has for your life. With God's help, when you are focused, you will achieve your dreams.

Just like God has a purpose for each one of us, He also has a purpose for each family. For this reason, God puts hopes and dreams in the hearts of parents for their families. Maybe they have a dream for their children to love and serve God or for their children to receive a college education. Maybe they have a dream of starting a family business or building a new home. Perhaps they feel God is leading their family to serve as missionaries. And just like with individuals, when parents pray together and invite God to be involved in their family, God will be with them and show them His purpose. As God guides them, He will help their dream become a reality.

Although God wants us to have hopes and dreams, He also wants us to be sure that our dreams are a part of His plan for our life. The Bible says, "Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Our dreams are the desires of our heart. Because God is the one who

puts the dreams in your heart, He will help make your dreams come true.

In order for us to see our dreams come true, we need to do our very best in everything we do as individuals and as families. By trusting that God will help us, we will achieve our dreams. God also tells us that when we put our trust in Him, we are able to do far more than we could ever ask or dream (Ephesians 3:20). Hope changes everything!

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about their hopes and dreams.
- Lead children in a discussion about why we need to have hopes and dreams.
- Lead children in a discussion about why it's important to have a vision for our lives.
- Lead children in a discussion about why families need to have hopes and dreams.
- Ask children to tell about some of their unique gifts.
- Ask children to share their hopes and dreams for their future.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Cloud handout

Pencils, markers, and crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/rqCplr1c72w>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Then have children write some dream words for their family in the center of the cloud to help them think about their parents' vision for their family. Give children a chance to share some of the words they chose and why. (See cloud Handout.)
- Children that cannot write are encouraged to draw a picture of what they want to be.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencils, markers, and crayons

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/WnYuA8cmtt8>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write down three things they have always wanted to do, but never acted on.
- Now write down three steps they can take to begin to make them happen.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I SPENDING ENOUGH TIME TALKING TO GOD
ABOUT MY HOPES AND DREAMS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

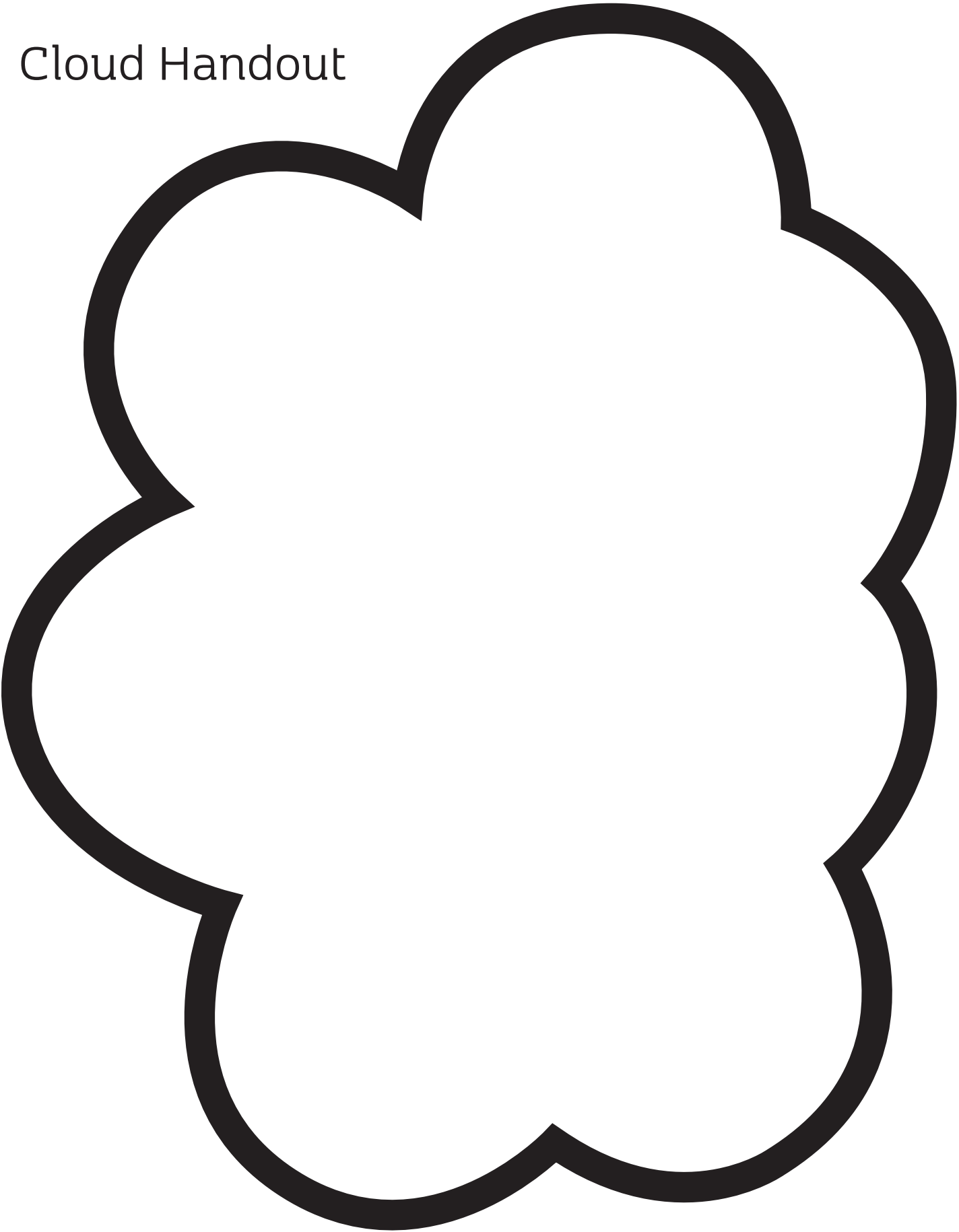
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God has great plans
for my life!*

Cloud Handout



Learning & Education

Dear Facilitator: This week we are going to focus on learning and education, which involves more than just formal schooling. As we consider why it is important for our families to value education, and why it's important for us to be life-long learners, we will talk about different kinds of education and what it takes to make choices and sacrifices to educate our families and ourselves well.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Explain the value of education and learning.
2. Be ready to do what God calls them to do.


During this lesson, we will articulate why families should value learning and education. Education should be valued because it prepares us to do what God calls us to do. It is our hope that at the end of this lesson, families will have a better understanding of God's plan for them.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time discussing hopes and dreams.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** This week we will discuss learning and education, which involves more than just formal schooling.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the value of education and learning.
2. Be ready to do what God calls us to do.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Education and learning start at home and prepare us for the purpose that God has intended for each of our families. Tonight, at your tables, let's talk about learning.

1. How do you learn best?
2. Who were some of your favorite teachers and why?
3. Why do you think education is important?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

40 minutes

Parent Training

Legacy

LEARNING & EDUCATION

What did you learn about how others in your family learn? As parents, we have a wonderful opportunity to educate our children and help them learn.

You might ask why we need to be educated. Education prepares each of us to do the work that God asks us to do and to live out our hopes and dreams.

As parents, we should affirm our children daily. We should make sure they attend school and take advantage of other education opportunities. We should help them with homework and read 20 minutes per day with them.

It is a challenging task to support education, but you are up to that challenge! It involves making choices and sacrifices and employing gritty determination to succeed.

Education and learning are the foundation to help us plan and prepare to reach our hopes and dreams.

You might wonder what the Bible has to say about education. The Bible speaks of the fear of the LORD as the beginning of wisdom.

Luke also points out that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. The word education may not appear in the English form in the Bible, but scripture does say a lot about the process of education, and it begins with the parent and child. The church also has historically promoted education and the improvement of the mind.

Our scripture passage tonight is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Notes

Write the five vital behaviors on the board.

Can anyone summarize the five vital behaviors (BGRAD)?

1. Believe in yourself.

The choice to affirm children daily can help them set better goals and can help them take more responsibility for their academic success.

2. Go to school.

Helping children get to school is one of the best ways to improve their chances for academic success.

3. Read at home.

Studies show that children who read books at home for just 20 minutes a day do better in school.

4. Ask for help.

Parents who monitor school progress closely and contact the school when their child has difficulty, help their children succeed in school.

5. Do your homework.

The time spent on homework is one of the best predictors of student grades and academic achievement.

Why is it so important to teach our families to value learning and education?

Let's read this case study and discover why education is important:

Joe fights back the tears, as he stands alone on the corner, his backpack slung carelessly over his shoulder. At 15, the first day of school is never a welcome occasion, but for Joe, the feeling of dread is rooted in more turmoil than the typical end-of-summer blues. Joe hates school. And what's worse, he doesn't see the point in it. "What's in this for me?" he thought to himself time and again last year, as he did just enough to get through his freshman year.

Joe is the type of kid who likes to work hands on, fixing his old car and building things in Grandpa's garage. He loves to talk to Grandpa about how it was in the old days. That's what Joe enjoys, and he doesn't see how the lessons at school apply to him. He hasn't thought much about what he wants to do when he gets older, and he doesn't feel any sense of direction towards the future. All he knows is that he can't stand the thought of wasting the next three years of his life in a boring classroom.

It wasn't always this way. Joe remembers how in second grade, going to school filled him with excitement. He was even excited about his first spelling test, and he felt so grown up bringing something home to study. But he needed someone to quiz him, and when he went to the kitchen to ask his mom, she seemed too busy to help. "Not now, Joe." She said. "I've got dishes to do and bills to pay and your sister still hasn't had her bath. Go to your room and play."

"I guess school must not be all that important," Joe thought to himself.

Now, Joe stands at the crossroads. To his right is his high school. He knows that if he hurries, he can still make it to class before the first hour bells rings. But to his left, he sees the skateboard park, where a couple of guys he knew in middle school are trying out new tricks. Someone told him they dropped out of school.

DISCUSS

- What decisions could Joe make and how will they affect his life?
- If Joe's parents had used the five vital behaviors, how could they have changed the situation?
- What choices or sacrifices do Joe and his family have to make?
- What choices and behaviors would help your family value learning and education even more?



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 4:5

Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them.

Proverbs 1:8

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Proverbs 23:12

Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.



Scripture SUPPORT

Isaiah 54:13

*All your children will be taught
by the LORD, and great will be
their peace.*

Romans 8:28

*And we know that in all things
God works for the good of those
who love him, who have been
called according to his purpose.*

2 Timothy 3:14-15

*But as for you, continue in what
you have learned and have
become convicted of, because
you know those from whom you
learned it, and from infancy you
have known the Holy Scriptures,
which are able to make you wise
for salvation through faith in
Christ Jesus.*

We are to bring honor and glory to God in everything we do and fulfill the calling that He has given to us and our families. This includes hard work, determination, diligence, and living as God intended us to live.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain the value of education and learning.
2. Be ready to do what God calls us to do.

As we close, I want to read a poem called *At the Crossroads*. Let's ask ourselves this evening: How can we show our children and families a better road? (Read poem.)

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

At the Crossroads

He stood at the crossroads all alone,
The sunlight in his face;
He had no thought for an evil course,
He was set for a manly race.
But the road stretched east and the
road stretched west,
And he did not know which road
was the best;
So he took the wrong road and it led
him down,
And he lost the race and the
victor's crown.
He was caught at last in an
angry snare
Because no one stood at the
crossroads there
To show him the better road.
Another day at the self-same place
A boy with high hopes stood;
He, too, was set for a manly race
He was seeking the things that
were good.
And one was there who the roads
did know,
And that one showed him the
way to go;
So, he turned away from the road
leading down,
And he won the race and the
victor's crown;
He walks today on the highways fair
Because one stood at the
crossroads there
To show him a better road.

-Sadie Filler Crawley

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Legacy

LEARNING & EDUCATION

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance of learning and education.
- Help children to be aware of the different types of learning.
- Help children be aware that some learning is a part of the preparation for their purpose.
- Help children to be aware that as Christians our most important textbook is the Bible.
- Help children to be aware that the most important lesson we learn is to love, honor, and obey God.

We all know that learning and education is important! Can you imagine what it would be like if we lived in a world full of people who had no knowledge or education? When we think of learning and education, we usually think of going to school and being in a classroom where we listen to teachers sharing new information with us. It is true that a lot of our learning and education happens at school, but did you realize that your parents and other adults in your family are you first teachers? In the Bible, God tells us to pay attention to our parents' instruction (Proverbs 1:8). Even our siblings, cousins, and friends teach us lessons like how to ride a bike, how to

jump rope, how to catch a ball, how to tie shoes, how to put make-up on, or how to tie a necktie. We are constantly learning!

When God created you, He knew you were going to need to have parents to protect you, care for you, and provide for you. God also knew you would need parents who would understand how the world operates and who could teach what you need to know to have a good life. God gave you just the right parents who would work alongside Him to make sure you grow up to be the person He created you to be.

Parents are also the first to teach you how to communicate, how to share, how to

● solve problems, how to practice good manners, and how to show love, respect, and compassion. Parents help you experience the world. They take you to the grocery store, the park, the zoo, the museum, and so many other places. They introduce you to the taste of your first ice cream cone, your first dill pickle, or meatballs and spaghetti! Your parents let you watch certain TV shows. All these experiences are a part of your early learning and education. All your learning and education is preparing you to serve God in a very special way. Your parents are usually the first to notice what kind of gifts God has given you. For instance, maybe they notice that you are good at math and science, so they enroll you in a special camp for children who like math and science. Perhaps they watch you dancing around the living room, so they may sign you up for a dance class. Maybe you are always wanting to help others who need cheering up, so they take you with them to volunteer at a senior citizen nursing facility. God gives parents hints about their children's gifts so that they will be able to help their children develop their gifts.

● For thirteen years, from kindergarten to high school graduation, we attend school nearly every day to gain the knowledge and information that the world says we must know to have a successful life. In the Bible, God tells us to get wisdom and understanding. God says, "Do not forget my words or turn away from them" (Proverbs 4:5). Yes, textbook learning is important to God, but to Him, the most important education comes from your parents, your first teachers. They are responsible to give you an education about what the Bible—our heavenly textbook—says.

● God knows that when parents teach you what the Bible says, you will be led to Him. This is the way parents teach their children to love and honor God and His Son, Jesus. In His Word, God commands parents to educate and train their children about Him. God wants you to know Him as your loving heavenly Father (Proverbs 22:6).

Notes

Notes

Parents are to help you practice the behavior that makes your heavenly Father happy and proud of you. In the Bible, God promised us that if we continue to love, honor, and obey Him, all things in our life will work for our good, and we will have a successful life (Romans 8:28). If we ask God to guide our footsteps on the life path He has planned for us, we will become what He intended us to be. In the Bible God says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). We are to learn about God and His Son, Jesus, and practice those things we learn in our lives. The Bible says true knowledge comes from honoring and respecting God the Father and His Son, Jesus (Proverbs 9:10).

Just like we read and study textbooks and other materials to learn information about the world, more importantly, God has given us the Bible to learn about Him and a heavenly world we will live in one day.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the purpose for their learning and education.
- Lead children in a discussion about the difference in textbook learning and Bible learning.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible says is the most important learning and education. Why?
- Lead children in a discussion about their parents' responsibility for their learning and education.
- Lead children in a discussion about their responsibility for their learning and education.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Pencils, markers

Whiteboard

Erasable markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/smT2jsAW9xM>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Ask children to write down three important things they have learned at school and three important things they have learned at home. Have them share with the group. (To save time rather than having the children write the responses down, you can solicit their responses from the group and write them on the white board.)
- Then ask children to share some important things they have learned about God/Jesus at church and at home. Ask them why learning about God is more important than anything we will learn.

Notes

Notes

AGES 12-16

Materials

Whiteboard

Erasable Markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/YJbQphVcGxA>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Write these three phrases (attitudes about school) on a white/chalkboard to show the children.

Student A

"I am here to pass."

Student B

"I am here to get good grades,
so I can get into college."

Student C

"I am here to gain intelligence
and knowledge."

- Let the children share some of their thoughts about each phrase.
- Tell the children to imagine three students are in the same class—each of them have one of the attitudes (above). Have the children answer the following questions about each student: (You can answer them as a class, put them in groups, or have them do this exercise individually.)
 1. Where might they sit in class? Why?
 2. When do they arrive to class typically?
 3. Do they study for class? How?
 4. Would they feel comfortable cheating?
 5. Do they respect the teacher?
 6. How does their behavior in class look?
 7. Who seems to have the brightest future?
Why do you think so?
- Then ask the children why God says learning about Him is the most important thing we will ever learn.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I LEARNING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS
IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
I NEED TO LEARN?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*All my learning and
education is preparing
me to serve God in
a very special way!*

Your Family Has a Kingdom Purpose

Dear Facilitator: This week we are going to focus on your families' kingdom purpose. The scripture story for tonight's lesson is found in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." The setting of this scripture is the story of creation. God created everything with a purpose, including our families.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Reflect God's image to others.
2. Take care of the earth.


During the lessons on family legacy, we will articulate the "why" of each lesson, and our hope is that at the end, all will have better understanding of God's plans for families. Why does my family have a kingdom purpose? Because God made families to reflect His image and to rule over the earth.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes

Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time talking about why it is important for families to value education and learning.


 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Reflect God's image to others.
2. Take care of the earth.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Being a good neighbor is part of how we can fulfill our purpose as a family. Every family has a purpose. God created families specifically to reflect His image in a unique way. God also created families to rule over the earth. This means to take care of the earth and all that is in the earth.

1. What does your family take care of?
2. When or how does your family show others about God?
3. What are some words or pictures or colors that make you think of family?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



How was the dinner discussion? Did anyone learn anything about how your family reflects God? Did anyone learn anything about what represents your family? Tonight, we want to consider our family purpose and then create a log that shows everyone that purpose.

Let's think back to all the lessons we have covered in this series. Review lessons.

We pursue learning and education. We figure out what we need to do to work on our plan. As we do all these things, we also remember that who we are as friends and neighbors reflects God's image.

All these topics have led us to begin to discover our families' kingdom purpose. Remember the "why" questions and answers? We often think of purpose as it relates to an individual when we talk about it at church; however, it is not unusual to think about a group having a purpose—companies do it all the time.

A family is a special group of people with a special purpose.

The Bible tells us about that special purpose during the story of creation. Genesis 1:26

says, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

The setting of this scripture is the story of creation. God created everything with a purpose, including our families.

God not only created man but also woman. He instructed them to fill the earth. Genesis tells us that God gave a job and a purpose to those He created to reflect His image and to "rule" over the earth.

Ruling over the earth means to take care of the earth. How my family "rules" over the earth may look very different from your family. This shows us that each of our families has a unique kingdom purpose to live out for God.

Notes

DISCUSS

- In what ways is your family unique in how you rule over or care for the world around you?
- How does your family reflect God's love to others through the unique ways you rule over the earth?

We want to help everyone represent your unique family purpose through the creation of a special logo for your family. We are going to take everything we have done the last few weeks and create a unique family logo for each of you. Logos are simply images and words that represent a group. Think of popular logos in fashion, music, food, or other areas. (Bring picture of logos.)

Create a family logo.

1. Review your notes from "Family & Table Talk" time with your children and any other notes from this series.
2. Think about what image most represents your family. It can have your family initials. It can be an object that symbolizes your family. It can be several images together. You can also think about different colors that represent your family.
3. Choose from the art supplies provided.
4. Create your family logo. You can get started and complete this with the assistance of your children.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Reflect God's image to others.
2. Take care of the earth.

Is there anyone who would like to share his or her family logo?

We hope that tonight you have been encouraged as you think about how special your family is in God's kingdom.

Please share your logo with your children and get further input from them. It is a great way to remind your whole family who you are and what you want to reflect to others.

Why does my family have a purpose? Because God made families to reflect His image and to rule over the earth.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parents this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Mark 12:30-31

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Joshua 24:15

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Genesis 18:19

For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just...

Hebrews 13:16

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Legacy

KINGDOM PURPOSE

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that their family has a kingdom purpose.
- Help children to be aware of the meaning of kingdom purpose.
- Help children to be aware of responsibilities of parents in a kingdom-focused family.
- Help children to be aware of responsibilities of children in a kingdom-focused family.
- Help children to be aware of how being in a kingdom-focused family prepares them to serve God.

We have talked about the fact that God has a plan and purpose for our lives as individuals. But did you know that God also has a kingdom purpose for your family? God wants families to represent Him in the earth by being good neighbors. Being good neighbors means reaching out and touching lives in the community and positively effecting the world around you (Mark 12:31). Everything that God created has a purpose to fulfill His plans and desires. God loves families, and they are a very important part of His kingdom plan.

God joins just the right people together in a family, and He has plans to use each

family to make a difference in the earth by serving Him in a special way. God created family to be a partnership that has spiritual responsibilities to its family members, community, and to the world. Parents are the leaders of the family. When parents ask Jesus to be the head of their lives, it is then up to them to ask Jesus to be at the center of their family. In the Bible, Joshua said, “As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Once parents decide that their family will serve the LORD, God gets involved and begins to use the entire family to positively impact the community. This is a kingdom-focused family—a family seeking to be used for God’s purpose.

Being in a Christian family is like being in a training camp that prepares God's servants—parents and children—to serve as bright lights in a dark world. God tells us that as His children, we are the light of this world. He tells us to “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). What we do in our daily life reflects our love for God, as individuals and as families.

Family provides a safe place where all members can experience a taste of God's unconditional love and support through one another. God created the family to be your first place for learning about God's kingdom purpose for your family, your responsibility as a child of God, and sharing the good news about Jesus Christ (Genesis 18:19). Parents have a responsibility to guide their family in learning how the Word of God instructs us to be good neighbors as followers of Christ. Parents then model these behaviors for their children by practicing what the Bible says. Parents also have the responsibility to teach their children how to communicate with God by leading their family in prayer. They show their children how to love God through worship, praise, and giving. Your parents are reminded that they are to teach you and your siblings to respect, honor, and obey God's Word through everyday living. Family is where children learn about love, giving, sacrifice, and serving others in their home, school, church, and community. When parents lead and guide their children in these ways, your family will become kingdom focused.

As Christians, everything we do as individuals and as families should bring glory to God. The way we live our lives each day makes God proud of us—that is our true way of worshipping Him and making Him happy (Hebrews 13:16). God did not create families just to care for themselves; instead, He created families to reach out to others in the community for Him. God's kingdom purpose for your family is that you demonstrate His love, compassion, generosity, joy, and peace so well that it makes others ask you about the God you are serving. We are to be His hands caring for others, His smile brightening

Notes

someone's day, His eyes seeing the good in someone who has been downtrodden, His feet running that errand for someone who needs support, or His voice for someone needing an encouraging word. God's kingdom purpose for family is to raise children to love, honor, obey, and serve God by working for Him in the world and by bringing others into the family of God.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the meaning of "kingdom purpose."
- Lead children in a discussion about what makes God get involved in a family so that they become kingdom focused.
- Lead children in a discussion about why being in a family can be like being in a training camp.
- Ask children what kinds of things children should learn in a kingdom-focused family training camp.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways families can show that they are a kingdom-focused family.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper lunch bags

Stickers

Markers/Crayons

Pink and red (cut-out) paper hearts (at least 10 per child)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/p9diFwUly4M>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Love Prayer Bags: Give each child a lunch bag to decorate with markers and stickers. The child will then be given cut out hearts to write a name of someone

they know on each heart. Then have children place all the hearts INSIDE the lunch bag. Encourage the children to take one heart out of the love bag each day and say a prayer for that person to experience God's love that day. Let children share some of the names they are writing on the hearts and why they chose them. Tell them at the end of the week, they can put them all back in the bag and start over the next week or add more of their own hearts.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Large, long roll of paper

Markers

Glue

Pictures from magazines

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/vzXy_97tyDI

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

God's Love Banner: Find a very large area for the children to roll out the paper as one, long banner. Let children write Ephesians 3:18-19 on the rolled-out banner and make colorful, big letters for the words: HOW WIDE, LONG, HIGH, DEEP is GOD'S LOVE FOR ME! Decorate with pictures that help illustrate things that represent God's love. This very long banner is fun to hang along a hallway wall for children to enjoy for a couple of weeks!

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I SHOW OTHERS THE LOVE OF GOD THROUGH
MY WORDS AND ACTIONS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*My light shines brightly
as I show others the
love of God!*

Communication

Dear Facilitator: You are beginning a new section of the Family Leadership Initiative curriculum which will be focused on family behavior.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

This lesson will help participants to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

This lesson focuses on the message of Proverbs 15:28, which talks about the importance of thinking carefully before we speak.

During the lessons on family behavior, you will add a statement each week to the Family Commitment Statements.

Our hope is that you will repeat each of these statements weekly.


This week's commitment statement is: I commit to communicating clearly and effectively to build family relationships that are strong and healthy.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Over the past few weeks, we have talked about family identity, our roles as parents and children, and how important it is to build our family team. (Share House Diagram and explain.)

We are now going to further explore how God's idea of family is built on a foundation of faith.

As we cover our families in prayer and believe what God says in the Bible, we are building a Christian home.

We all have the responsibility to consider our actions and take responsibility and ownership for those actions.


During the next several weeks, we will be talking about some practical behaviors that will help us support each other as families.

Discuss: As you think about what we have discussed and learned about your family's identity and roles the past few weeks, write down a couple of things that have helped you in your family. Would anyone be willing to share?

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Tonight, we are going to talk about communication. We will discuss the difference between what we mean to say, what we really say, and how the message is interpreted by the receiver. Sometimes what the speaker intends to say does not match with what the receiver interprets.

During dinner, we are going to play a game that many of you may have played before.



Share: Before we do, I want to share a story with you about communication in my family.

(Share a story of a time when what you said was misunderstood and resulted in a mess.)

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: At your tables we are going to play a game called “Telephone.”

One person begins by whispering a phrase to the person on his or her left. That person whispers the message to the next person and so on. The last person to receive the message announces it to the group.

1. How much or how little did the communication change?
2. Why do you think that happened?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Behavior	COMMUNICATION

Say: The Bible says in Proverbs 15:28, “The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.”

To “weigh” our answers, meaning to think carefully about how we speak, we are going to study a diagram to better understand how communication works.

When thinking about communication, keep the following in mind:

1. Are you saying what you mean to say?
2. How are you saying it?
3. How is it being heard?

There are many things that can get in the way of communicating clearly. Our tone, body language, and emotions can get in the way of the message.

It is my responsibility to “own” or be responsible for my communication and the impact it has on others.

Our family commitment statement tonight is: I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully to build healthy and strong family relationships.

Wouldn’t it be great if everything we said or thought was perfectly understood by others in our family?

Let’s look at the Family Communication handout and talk about what it means.

The channel is the way we send the message to the person or receiver. The channel can be anything from a text, email, letter, talking in person, or talking on the phone.

Within the channel and the communication system there is “noise” which affects how the receiver decodes or interprets that message. Noise can be feelings, activities that are taking place around us, or other things that distract the sender and receiver.

When the message is decoded or interpreted by the receiver, there is usually a response which goes back through the channel. The response is received by the original sender and decoded through all the noise.

It's easier to understand than you may think.

Tonight, we are going to learn a few techniques to help us become better senders and receivers. Before we do, let's talk about a couple of things and get your thoughts.

DISCUSS

- How can emotions be noise in the system?
- What are different channels or means to communicate?
- How do you select what is best for the situation?

The goal of communication is not to win or lose. The goal of good communication is to understand and connect better with one another.

Good communication helps us hear the meaning behind the words that are spoken. As a sender of a message, it's important learn to do the following:

- 1. Say what you mean.**

Example: Instead of coming home and saying, "This house is always a mess," say what you mean such as, "Sam, it makes me upset that when I come home the house is messy. Will you please pick up the toys on the floor before you go to bed?"

- 2. Watch your body language and tone.**

Example: Your nonverbal communication (body movements) and tone of voice (loudness/softness, harshness/gentleness) should agree with the message.

- 3. Express emotion appropriately.**

Example: Think about how the receiver will receive a message. If you are angry, it won't work to say, "I'm not angry." However, it may also not work to scream, "I'm angry!"

The best communication is when your words, body language, tone, and emotions all agree.

If we are the receiver of a message, it is helpful to make sure we understand and hear what the sender

Notes

is communicating. Here are a few things we can do:

1. Stop.

Example: Give full attention to the sender—get off your cell phone!

2. Listen.

Example: Give eye contact, and really try to listen to the words that are being said.

3. Ask.

Example: Ask questions to clarify, and make sure to understand what the sender is saying. “Are you saying that you need me to help take care of the house? Are you tired when you come home?”

The best response is to stop, listen, and ask questions before we respond with our opinions and feelings.

Ask the audience to share examples of a time when they communicated something and their body language, tone, or emotions didn’t agree with what they said. Or share a time when they neglected to stop, listen, and ask.

It’s important to learn to say, “I was wrong” or “I am sorry” when you say the wrong things in the wrong way. Some of us speak our minds and should listen first and put more thought into our communication.

Other people feel that what they have to say doesn’t matter or isn’t important, but they should speak up more quickly about their thoughts and feelings.

All of us should remember to be willing to adjust our expectations appropriately and even laugh together about things that may not be as important as we originally thought they were.

Let’s watch this skit and see what happens.

Thirty-Second Skit

1. Start with a 30-second skit with a family arguing, fussing, and not communicating well. Scenario: Mom and Dad had a tough day at work and come home to no dinner or a messy house with kids creating “noise” in the system.

2. Give prepared labels (Dad, Mom, Son, and Daughter) to volunteers and ask them to wear the labels and pretend to be that person in the skit.
3. Instruct the audience before the skit participants come out to think of ways to improve this communication based on what we are learning.

After 30 seconds of acting, ask the actors to freeze in place.

Communication conflicts are not bad, but the way people talk to each other can be hurtful or helpful.

People are not born knowing how to solve conflicts in a positive way; they must learn and practice good communication skills.

Like most new skills, it is awkward at first, but good communication skills help families develop good leadership.

Let's repeat our family commitment statement:
I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully in order to build healthy and strong family relationships.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalm 19:14

*May the words of my mouth
and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD,
my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Proverbs 13:3

*Those who guard their lips
preserve their lives, but those
who speak rashly will come
to ruin.*

Matthew 12:34

*...For the mouth speaks what
the heart is full of.*

Ephesians 4:29

*Do not let any unwholesome talk
come out of your mouths, but
only what is helpful for building
others up according to their
needs, that it may benefit those
who listen.*

1 Peter 3:8

*Finally, all of you, be like-minded,
be sympathetic, love one
another, be compassionate
and humble.*

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

COMMUNICATION

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance communication plays in our lives.
- Help children to be aware of appropriate use of communication.
- Help children to be aware of what the Bible says about communication.
- Help children to be aware of the power of the words they speak.
- Help children to be aware that facial expressions and body language are part of communication.
- Help children to be aware of the way they are using their words.

Today we're going to talk about what the Bible says about communication. Communication is sharing thoughts, ideas, feelings, or information. Good communication is very important to all people. Of all the creatures God created, He only gave humans the ability to communicate using words. The ability to use words to communicate is a powerful gift from God. In the Bible, God also gave us lessons about how we are to use this special gift. As Christians we should use this gift to be a blessing to everyone that we meet.

The main way we communicate is with our words and with our actions. The first place we learn to communicate is within our family. When you were just a baby, you

learned very quickly to communicate by crying or screaming to let your parents know you were unhappy or uncomfortable.

This let them know that you were hungry, you needed to have your diaper changed, or you just wanted to snuggle and be held. When you were happy or satisfied you let them know by smiling or just being calm or maybe making sweet gurgling baby noises. This manner of communicating was okay when you were a tiny baby, but because parents knew you needed to use the appropriate way to express your thoughts, ideas, and feelings, they soon began to teach you basic words. They taught you how to use words to ask for what you needed or wanted and how to get their attention when

you were unhappy or uncomfortable without crying or screaming. Your parents also helped you learn how to use words when you wanted to let them know when you were happy, tell them about something you were learning, or ask them questions about a new experience.

Your parents were the first to use words to teach you and encourage you. As they taught you, they showed their patience and love for you while using their words. They were teaching you that positive communication helps to nurture and lift others up. It is important that we do the same for family members and others. We can start by listening carefully to one another when sharing thoughts and feelings. Then you will have a better understanding of one another as you work together.

Another important part of communication that we must remember is using our words to express good manners. “Please” and “thank you” can take you far in life. Also, it is important to apologize when we have hurt or disappointed someone. Often, a sincere “I’m sorry” is all it takes to heal the situation (1 Peter 3:8).

Along with using our words to communicate, we also use our facial expressions and body language—the way your face looks when you are talking or the way your body is either relaxed, excitable, or tense. Your words and the look in your eyes and on your face also communicate what you are trying to say.

God wants us to lead healthy, enjoyable, and peaceful lives. In the Bible, He tells us about the importance of our words, whether we live a life filled with goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.

Proverbs 13:3 says, “Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.”

The Bible tells us that our words are so powerful that they have the ability to make things better or worse. The words that come from our mouth show what is truly in our hearts (Matthew 12:34). Our words have the power to encourage others or put them down.

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It is important that we ask ourselves how we are using our words when we are communicating with others. Are the words that come out of your mouth filled with love or hatred, meanness or kindness, encouragement or discouragement? God holds each one of us accountable for the words that come out of our mouth.

Psalm 19:14 says, “May the words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

I believe that it would be wise for all of us to pray this scripture often. In praying this, we are asking God to help our hearts and thoughts be filled with things that are pleasing to Him, so that the words that come out of our mouths would make Him happy and proud of us.

Good communication between people is very important in our world today. That is why the Bible has a lot to say about how we use our words. God’s Word is very clear to instruct us on how we are to speak to and treat one another. One way we can be careful about the words we speak is to simply think before we speak. We can ask ourselves the following questions: Am I saying what I mean to say? Do I choose my words accurately to state the message I am speaking, or do I add harsh words?

Do my words match my body language and facial expressions? (Am I saying I am not angry, but my face is frowning, and my eyes are glaring?) How does my voice sound? (Is it calm and settled or agitated and angry?) Finally, how is my message being heard? (Does it feel like it is seeking to make the situation better or worse?) It is important to say exactly what you mean, to watch your facial expressions and body language, and to keep your voice level calm.

Another way we can improve our communication skills is to remember to say to others only what we would want them to say to us and in the way we would want someone to say it to us. When it is our time to receive a message, we need to stop what we are doing, give the person our attention and eye contact, and listen carefully. We should not be thinking about what

we are going to say back. Then ask any questions necessary to help you understand the message they are giving you.

Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” As Christians, God has given us the command to use our words to make the world better by speaking to teach and solve problems, to bless and encourage others, to create and express ideas, to share positive uplifting information, and to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible tells us about the power of our words.
- Lead children in a discussion about how facial expressions and body language play an important part in communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about how our words can either help us live a life of goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.
- Lead children in a discussion about how the Bible tells us we are to speak to one another.

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Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/3RjRZ9jMfs0>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Tell the children that they are about to play a game called “Telephone.” Have the children get in a circle. Tell the children that you are going to whisper a message into someone’s ear. Then, that person will whisper in the ear of the person next to them to deliver the message, and that person will do the same, and so on and so forth. The hope for the game is that the message the instructor sent out through the circle is the same when it gets back to the instructor.

DISCUSS

This game reflects how listening carefully is an important part of communication.

AGES 12-16

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/WER63AY8zB8>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

The instructor should explain to the children that they will have to form a team based on the instructions that you shout out. For example, some instructions could include, “Get into a team with people who watch some of the same TV programs as you or have on the same shoe brand as you,” or “Get into a team with people who like similar types of music.”

This will cause children to have to walk around and ask questions and communicate with peers.

DISCUSS

- Talk with the children about how this activity encouraged them to communicate.
- How could they learn to open and communicate more effectively in situations in the future?

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CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I USING MY WORDS TO ENCOURAGE
OTHERS AND LIFT THEM UP?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

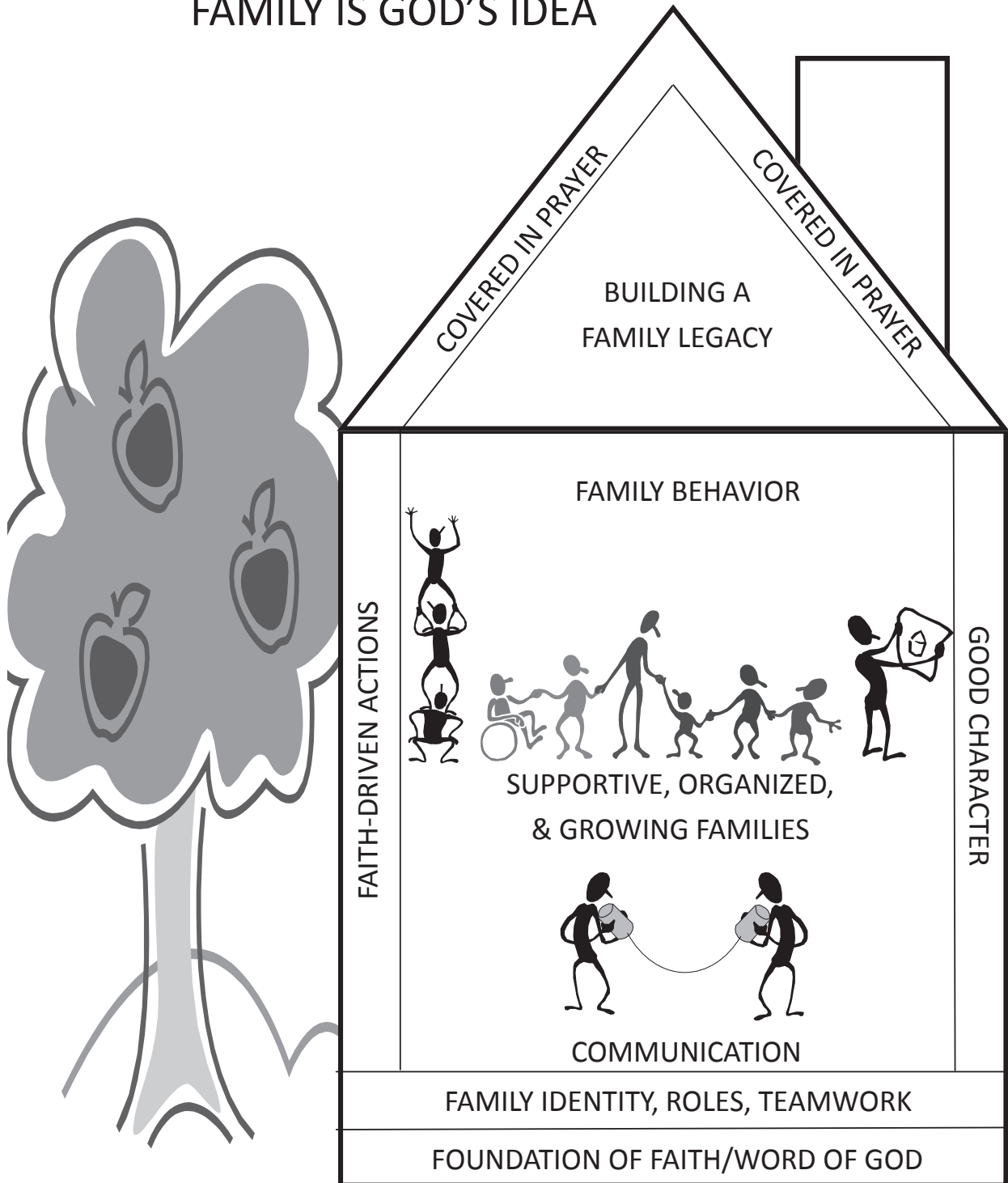
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I use my words to
be a blessing to others!*

FAMILY IS GOD'S IDEA



Creating a Supportive Home

Dear Facilitator: This week's lesson is about creating a supportive home. Our homes are supported best when we have structure or rules in place to provide protection and security for our families.

Rules are meant for our good, and as parents, we should always make rules for our children by considering what is best for each child.

The lesson incorporates Proverbs 6:20-23, which establishes the authority of parents and shows the benefits of obeying their commands and instructions.

Parent's corrective discipline and life guidance are ways to a successful life.

The lesson uses the principles of making rules, sticking together, and staying in charge as ways to encourage parents about rule setting.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Explain the benefits of rules.
2. Create rules that support the family to get along and enjoy being together.


During the lessons on family behavior, we are adding a statement each week to the Family Commitment Statements. Our hope is that you will repeat of these statements weekly.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare this lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Welcome *5 minutes*


 **Say:** We are so glad to welcome everyone back again this week.

Last week we talked about the communication system: its senders, receivers, channels, and noise. We learned that the sender should make sure they say what they mean, and that body language agrees with words.

Receivers should stop, listen, and ask before responding.

 **Ask:** Since everyone probably had an opportunity to do some communicating this week, I'm wondering if anyone tried something last week that made a positive difference your family communication that you would be willing to share.

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Remember last week we said we should be adding a statement to our Family Commitment Statements? Let's start with last week's statement and say it out loud:

I commit to communicating clearly and effectively to build family relationships that are strong and healthy.

Tonight, we are going to talk about how rules benefit our families. Tonight's commitment statement is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.


All of you already know how to set rules and do it every day with your children.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the benefits of rules.
2. Create rules that support the family to get along and enjoy being together.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table:

1. What rules do you have in your family for kids and parents?
2. Describe a time when following a family rule was very helpful.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Behavior

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE HOME

Proverbs 6:20-23 says, “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your other’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

Creating a supportive home starts with establishing authority in the home. Creating a supportive home begins with parents following God so that they can lead their families.

Next, it is important for parents and adults in the home to have an agreement to stick together about rules.

Finally, parents must stay in charge together. It is important to understand that we are never alone in our parenting. Whether it’s your spouse, other adults, or God, someone is always there.

The following are three basic principles to keep in mind: make rules, stick together, and stay in charge.

Tonight, we will discuss these principles, practice making some rules, and talk about how creating a supportive home really works in families.

As we said a moment ago, our family commitment statement tonight is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.

Would anyone be willing to share one of the rules you have in your family that you discussed at dinner tonight? Why do you have that rule for your family?

As we think about the rules in our families, it is good to consider why they exist. Rules are meant for our benefit and to protect us

and lead us. God has also given us rules in the Bible for these same reasons.

Rules create structure and guidelines for our lives and are helpful for children and adults.

Imagine what it would be like to drive around town or ride the bus without speed limits and no rules about driving. We might not even get anywhere!

The same is true for our families.

Rules, guidelines (or boundaries), and limits also provide security. Think of your house or apartment which has walls, doors, and a foundation. Your house has a structure which keeps your family safe, warm, and dry. Boundaries and rules for your family give emotional structure for your kids.

If we fail to set appropriate rules and limits, we undermine our ability to create a supportive home. It's like a house without walls.

To illustrate this point, let's observe two styles of rule setting.

Parents are Rule Setters. The facilitator or other should demonstrate the extremes of parents making too many and too few rules. Act out both styles of rule setting.

Example 1: The drill sergeant who takes the role of making too many rules and being overly strict. Include several strict rules and deliver them in a rigid manner.

Example 2: The opposite extreme—someone who is overly permissive, taking the position that children know what is best for them. They fear squelching children's creativity and want to be their child's friend. Present this form in an overly compliant manner.

Parents, would you choose to follow either of these styles of rule setting for your family? Why or why not?

Let's observe at one more style.

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Example 3: (Demonstrate a middle ground type of rule setter and incorporate the following principles in the example.) The parent who demonstrates how to make clear, specific rules for the way they want their child to behave. Model sticking together with their spouse or other adults in the household regarding rules, and apply appropriate consequences for misbehavior in a respectful manner.

How would this style of rule setting benefit your family?

As leaders in our families, the goal is to be leaders who think about what is best for your children. Sometimes it is so easy to just think about what it takes to get them quiet.

Sometimes we are tired, overwhelmed, and have a lot on our minds as parents, and it is hard to think about how to best discipline our children.

Even so, consequences are usually to teach our children rather than just to punish. Rules are about training children to act in ways that reflect the family's values, and appropriate consequences further help our children do what is right.

Tonight, we are going to think about the rules in our family, their effectiveness, and how well they match our family values.

ACTIVIDAD

Do the Take-Home Worksheet

We should think about our family values when making rules. Rules are our "values in action."

As parents, we want to think and talk together about what is important for our children to learn and do.

A few examples of values might be honesty, education, hard work, peacefulness, organization, generosity, good manners, responsibility, and many more.

If one of your values is honesty, you may want to have a rule that says we must always tell the truth in our family. If it is good manners, you may want to have a

rule that says we must always say “please” and “thank you.” Always be clear in the rules you set and try to stick to just a few.

1. Work in groups to write down something that is important to your family.
2. Circle two to three rule categories to get started.
3. Work together in your group to write three rules that are clear and easy to understand.

Rules should be clear so that everyone knows what they are. It's important that parents are consistent and stick together on establishing and teaching rules.

What are some of the ways we can support one another as adults/parents to stick together on establishing and enforcing rules?

Enforcing rules by staying in charge helps children learn that there are consequences for their actions.

Hebrews 12:6 tells us that discipline is hard to take, but it gives us many benefits.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 6:20

My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Colossians 3:20

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the LORD.

Ephesians 6:2

“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE HOME

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that being in a supportive home is a gift from God.
- Help children to be aware that God wants all children to live in a supportive home where they can learn about Him and what the Bible teaches.
- Help children to be aware that parents enforce rules and boundaries that are necessary in a supportive home.
- Help children to be aware that rules and boundaries in a supportive home help family members do well at home, at school, and in the world.
- Help children to be aware that God commands parents to train their children according to what the Bible teaches.
- Help children to be aware that the Bible instructs them to honor and obey their parents.

Belonging to a family and having a comfortable, supportive home to live in is a gift from God. Parents work with God's help to create the kind of home that will support you as you learn about Him and learn to live your life according to what the Bible tells you to do. Every family member must do their part to make home a loving, safe, orderly, respectful, peaceful, and enjoyable place for adults and children to get along and enjoy being together.

We have learned that your family is a team, and your parents are the team leaders or coaches. They set the guidelines for how the family members are expected to behave. Like any team, for its members to do well, the coaches must set certain rules and boundaries, and team members are expected to learn and follow those rules. Family rules are much the same. Parents set the rules and boundaries, and they are meant for your good.

We have also learned that family serves as a kind of training camp where we learn and practice what we need to do to live well. In the world, there are many rules and boundaries. For us to learn about rules and boundaries, we must start learning as soon as we are old enough for our parents to teach us. Therefore, home training and support are so important. In the Bible, God tells you to keep your father's commands, and to obey our mother's teaching (Proverbs 6:20). This is God's way of letting us know that in addition to your parents being your first teachers, He has given parents the responsibility to be the authority over you. As the authority, parents set rules and boundaries that will help you learn appropriate behavior and make your home a healthy place for family members to live and grow.

Can you imagine people driving around town with no traffic rules or speed limits? It would not be safe, and it would cause a lot of trouble for everyone. The same is true for rules in our homes. Rules teach family members how to treat each other with respect and help family members get along better. A home where parents set no rules would be a place of confusion and trouble for members of the family.

When families learn to love and respect one another, and rules and boundaries are in place, it creates an environment where family members enjoy spending time together. Spending time together as a family is a very important. Whether it's going on a road trip, spending an evening at home playing board games, or popping some popcorn and watching a movie, the point is to be together. Spending time together creates family memories that brings families closer together.

God wants parents to make Him an important part of the family team. When God becomes a part of the family, parents pray and ask Him for His help, and He is happy to be involved. Children learn what the boundaries are and what their parents' expectations are. God helps parents make rules that will be fair, effective, and create the kind of home that will be peaceful and enjoyable for everyone.

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Children, God has given you a responsibility too! The Bible tells you to obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right (Colossians 3:20). The Bible also tells you to honor your father and your mother so that you will have a long life (Ephesians 6:2-3). You must always remember that parents are in charge, and they are commanded by God to help you discover your gift and your purpose in life, and to train you in the way God says you are to behave.

You can pray and ask God to help you to remember the rules and guidelines your parents have set for you and to give you the strength to obey. With your help, God will give your parents the wisdom to create a loving home for you to live in that will guide you and support you while you grow to become the person He wants you to be.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what a supportive home is.
- Lead children in a discussion about why families need to create a supportive home.
- Lead children in a discussion about why parents need to set rules, guidelines, and boundaries.
- Ask children how a supportive home is like a training camp.
- Ask children what families can do to get God to help them create a supportive home.
- Ask children what the rules, guidelines, and boundaries are in their home.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Candy bars

Clear packing tape

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/nh1ICEOrBtA>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Before the children arrive, tape candy bars onto the wall high enough so kids can't reach them without standing on chairs. The instructor should tell the kids the object of the game is to reach the candy bars without the help of furniture or other people.

For this game, let the kids try to grab the candy bars. Once they've given up, have them form groups and work together to reach the candy bars. Also, give the children tips to help them get the candy down from the wall. For example, tell them to try and give each other boosts or to use a chair. Discuss.

This activity reflects on the importance of having a support system (in your home) to lift you up.

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AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper
Envelopes
Writing utensils

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/nh1ICEOrBtA>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Have the instructor tell the children to think about some of the things their families have done to support them. Let them think for a few minutes.

Then, the instructor should pass out the paper and the writing utensils to the children. Tell the children to make a small list of some of supportive things their families have done for them.

Once they are done with that, have the children write a thank you letter to their parent/guardian thanking them for everything they have done to support them. Put the letters in envelopes and have them present them to their parents. Allow time for children to read their letters if they would like.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE OUR HOME
EVEN MORE SUPPORTIVE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I honor my parents as
they set rules and create
a supportive home for me
to grow into the person
God created me to be.*

1. WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY VALUE?
2. WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

RULE CATEGORIES			
Homework	Bedtime	Chores	Mealtime
Curfew	Dating	Car Use	Friends
Health	Church Attendance	Music	Phone / Video Games

CHOOSE 2 CATEGORIES

_____ & _____

MAKE 3 RULES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Organizing Your Family for Success

Dear Facilitator: This week's lesson is about organizing for success. Some people feel intimidated when they think of getting organized, and others thrive on schedules, routines, and planning. The goal of our lesson is to think about organization from a practical viewpoint of three categories: routines, events, and projects.

The lesson includes a diagram of these three categories. It illustrates how routines create stability, how events are opportunities that can be a blessing or a distraction, and how projects provide a way to change.

Most people will see themselves fitting in one area more strongly than others; however, the discussion and the activities are intended to show how specific tasks and activities fit best in different categories. One category is not better than the others, but each one serves a different purpose.

The lesson takes a biblical example from Luke 14:28-39 where Jesus tells a story to His followers and asks them to consider the cost of following Him. We apply that principle by asking families to consider their tasks and to plan to be successful.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help their family with stability and change.

continued

Notes


During the lessons on family behavior, we continue to add a statement each week to the Family Commitment Statements. Our hope is that you will repeat each of these statements weekly.

This week's statement is: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare this lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will come together in God's love and become a source for friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week, we talked about how rules and guidelines benefit our families and help create a supportive home.

 **Ask:** How did last week's lesson impact you or your family?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes to read our Family Commitment Statements out loud together. (Review previous commitment statements.)

Tonight, we are going to talk about routines, events, and projects and how each one of these has its place in organizing for success.

It's not always easy to stay organized, especially if you have young children, but by getting your "To Do" list items in the right category, you will be amazed at how stability and change can work together to keep you successfully organized.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Tonight's commitment statement is the second objective: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table.

1. What are some routines that your family follows?
2. What are some events that your family puts on the calendar?
3. What are some projects that you would like to get done?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Behavior</i>	ORGANIZING YOUR FAMILY FOR SUCCESS

Stability and change may seem like opposites, but they actually work together to help us be organized for success in our families.

We all need to develop habits to be successful. We need to be willing to change and grow as our circumstances change.

As we consider all we must accomplish in our lives, most fit in one of three categories: routines, events, and projects.

Tonight, we are going to define what we mean by these categories and work together in groups to think about how we get things done.

Our family commitment statement is: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Let's get started and see what this commitment means.

Tonight, let's take a minute to think about how God created the world in Genesis. It says that on each day, He did something

different. Notice how He didn't create the fish before He created the water! We find order and organization in God's creation!

In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus tells us a story and says, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'"

Jesus was talking to His followers and asking them to consider the cost of following Him. It's important for us as families to sit down and consider the things we must accomplish and make sure that we plan our lives so that we will be successful.

This evening we are going to talk about the difference between these categories, and what happens if we put the things we

must do in the wrong category. One category is not better than the others, and we need all three to be successful.

Most of you will see yourself stronger in one category than the others.

Discuss examples of routines, calendar items, or projects that you talked about with your family at dinner. (Facilitator be prepared to share some of your own examples.)

Let's talk about the three categories where our "To Do" list might fit.

Routines are important because they provide stability in our families so children and adults know what to expect. Some examples of routines are washing the dishes, doing the laundry, or going to school. These are generally less time consuming than events and projects, and take less energy, but it takes a lot of commitment to stick to the routine. When we know how much time we need for routines, we can better plan for the events and projects in our lives.

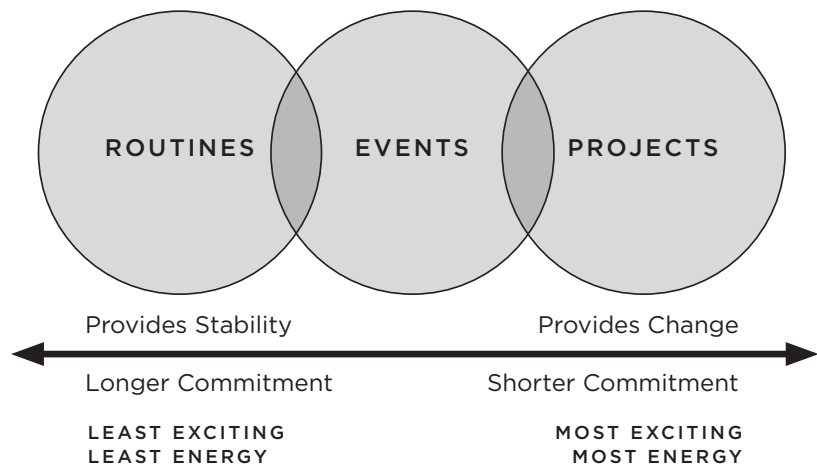
Events are occasions that we choose to attend. We make choices about events every day. Maybe it's attending a wedding, meeting friends, or going to church. These are often things we enjoy, but they don't usually take a lot of planning for us, just time. Events are important because they are opportunities for us to be a part of each other's lives. They can also be distractions if they take over our schedules. Events should be put on a calendar, so we don't forget them, and it's okay to say "no" sometimes. Events should usually be planed around routines.

Projects are important because they help us bring about changes in our families. Some examples of projects are spring cleaning or buying a new car. They are usually the most exciting and take the most energy and planning. Generally, people are excited about starting a project or something new, but a lot of time can be involved in starting and completing project. It is often important to make changes, not just for the sake of change, but because our life circumstances and needs change.

Notes

Notes

The diagram on your handout (take home) gives you a better idea of the differences between routines, events, and projects as we consider them in our family's organization.



Most of you will see yourself in one or more of these circles. One category is not better than the other; we should put items from our "To Do" list in all three categories. The problem comes when we put our "To Dos" in the wrong categories.

For example, what would happen if you decided that dinner time was a project? You would decide on a great meal, go get everything you need, cook all day, and make a huge mess! The outcome would likely be very exciting and fun, especially if you were with friends or family, but it would also take a lot of energy.

How likely would you be to repeat that every day?

You might decide it's too much work and only fix dinner occasionally. The outcome of that decision might not make others in your family very happy.

Or, if you decide to be out every night after work with friends or attend events, you might have a lot of fun, but you have decided to make those activities your regular routine, and you probably won't have much time for things like cleaning the house or paying the bills.

The choice to invest in your friends has taken over your life, and you could soon be quite disorganized.

Share a story about routine.

1. What category do you prefer? Routines, events, or projects, and why?
2. Why types of tasks do you sometimes miss getting done? When?
3. What are some items you would recommend for each category? Why?

We are going to organize our tasks into four specific areas.

(Divide into groups of three to four and take some time to work together on organizing lists and deciding if they fall into the category of routines, events, or projects.)

Worksheet activity. List how you would handle them now with an R (routines), E (events), or P (projects), and how you think you might want to handle them in the future (R, E, or P).

- **Self-care:** rest, exercise, etc.
- **Family Care:** eating, cleaning, etc.
- **Obligations & Activities:** Work, school, sports, etc.
- **Care for Possession:** our house, apartment, car etc.

DISCUSS

- What are some things that happen in your life that keep you from being organized?

Everyone can have a simple system of organization by categorizing your “To Do” list under routines, events, and projects.

Take the things that you should do every day or week to have stability and develop a routine.

Make sure that events are on a family calendar.

If there are projects that you would like to do, or need to do for a healthy change, then plan time and go for it.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the LORD, not for human masters.

Luke 14:28 says

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?

1 Corinthians 14:40

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

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Last of all, if you find you need help, find a partner to help you figure out how to get things done.

Remember, it's important for us as families to sit down and consider what we have to accomplish and make sure that we plan our lives so that we will be successful.

Our family commitment statement tonight is:
I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

**ORGANIZING YOUR
FAMILY FOR SUCCESS**

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance of family organizing.
- Help children to be aware of the three key areas of family organizing.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family routines.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family events.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family projects.

Organizing is a skill that is learned over time. When families are organized, it makes family life more orderly, focused, enjoyable, and meaningful. Parents are the leaders in organizing your family to be the best it can be, but they will need all family members to do their part to make it happen (Proverbs 21:5). We are going to talk about three different areas where organizing is important for families: routines, events, and projects.

Routines are an important part of family organization and are helpful for all families. Routines are completing daily tasks in your home and can cause your family bonds to grow stronger. Every family has routines that are unique and work for them. Routines let family members know who is responsible to do what,

when, and how often. Having routine job assignments in a family helps you learn to be responsible. Some examples of daily routines are getting ready in the morning, doing homework, setting the table for mealtimes, cleaning the dishes, getting ready for bedtime, and reading a bedtime story. Weekly routines may include tasks like housework, grocery shopping, and laundry. Routines help everything run more smoothly, and therefore, routines help families get along better with each other (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Routines serve many good purposes. Your job is to follow the instruction of your parents and do your very best with whatever tasks they assign to you. Remember the Bible says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as

Notes

working for the LORD, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23). So, when we’re talking about routines, the best gift you can give your parents is to pay attention, listen to their instruction, and obey. And the best gift you can give to your family is to do your part with a positive attitude.

Next, let’s talk about events. Events are occasions or various places that family members choose to go. Family events give you an opportunity to spend time with friends and get to know other people who are not members of your close family. Often, these activities or invitations are placed on a calendar and looked forward to by parents as well as the children in the family. We all know the excitement of waiting to go to the circus, a friend’s birthday party, or a concert by our favorite group! Whether it’s the circus, a birthday party, concert, wedding, baby shower, family reunion, or church, events are an important ingredient for parents to include in organizing for a successful family.

Although events can be interesting and enjoyable, there are events that can be unpleasant and even painful. Events such as attending a funeral, visiting someone in a hospital, or making a trip to the dentist can be sad and difficult. It is wise for parents to make sure we don’t put too many events on our calendar at the same time. Too many events scheduled at the same time can put stress on family members and cause problems. And as for you, make sure you have completed your everyday routine responsibilities so that you will be ready to participate in and enjoy the fun, special events your parents make possible for you.

Finally, we will look at the role projects play in organizing for success. A few weeks ago, we learned about the importance of families having dreams and desires. These dreams and desires will cause the family to have goals, and goals lead to family projects. Family projects are important because they bring about change in a family and help the family plan for the future. As parents make plans to help your family reach their goals

and make their dreams come true, many times they will involve the family in a project that they feel will be good for the family.

Projects can be exciting, but they also can take a lot of time and preparation (Luke 14:28). Some examples of projects could be buying a new car, saving to buy a new home, planning a family vacation, starting a healthy eating plan for the family, or so many other things. Sometimes parents may let you and your siblings take part in certain projects. This is good because it brings family members together as they spend time talking and planning for the project. They can have discussions about when the project will start, how it will be paid for, and roles and responsibilities of each family member to complete the project (1 Corinthians 14:40). This helps each member feel the importance of the family and that they are a valuable family member.

The goal of family organization must always be to create a home environment that will strengthen our relationship with God, our family members, and others. It is not always easy, but your parents are responsible for balancing the three key areas in getting your family organized: routines, events, and projects. When your parents are making sure that your family is doing their best to include and balance these, your family will be organizing for success.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what it means to be organized.
- Lead children in a discussion about the benefits of a family being organized.
- Lead children in a discussion about routines, events, and projects and how they help a family organize for success.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Pencils or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/yae0uwNJd4I>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Ask children to list their morning routine activities in order. If they don't have a morning routine, have them create one. Have them share with the group if they would like to. For instance:
 1. I wake up.
 2. I brush my teeth.
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- Review and discuss how routines help our family stay organized.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencils or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/yaeOuwNJd4I>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Divide children into small groups and ask them to develop a skit to demonstrate a family where some of the family members are NOT being responsible to do their part to keep family routines running smoothly.
- Next, have the children do a skit to demonstrate a family where everyone IS being responsible to do their part to keep family routines running smoothly.
- Discuss why it is important for everyone in the family to work together to help the family organize for success.

Notes




CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR
FAMILY ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I live this day with order; I help my parents keep our family organized!</i>

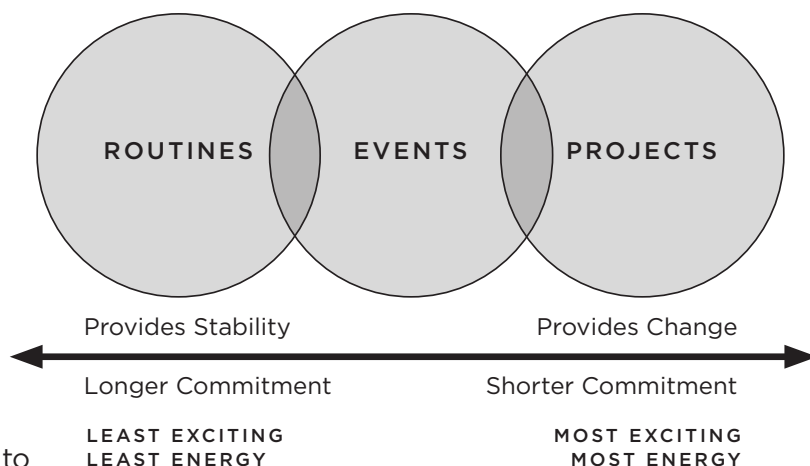
Worksheet

ORGANIZING YOUR FAMILY FOR SUCCESS

Directions:

- Work with your partner or group to make a list of “to do” items under each category.
- In the first small column put R (routines), E (events), or P (projects) to show what you do now.
- In the second small column put R (routines), E (events), or P (projects) to show if you think it should be changed.

Differences between routines, events, and projects as we consider them in our family's organization.



SELF CARE

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

FAMILY CARE

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

OPPORTUNITIES & ACTIVITIES

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

POSSESSIONS

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Growing Spiritually as a Family

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on growing spiritually as a family.

Growing spiritually starts with developing our own relationship with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and going to church to connect with others who want to do the same. Out of our own growth will flow the ability to have a home of faith where we talk with our families about God, bring Him into everyday situations, and follow His direction.

Finally, it is important to remember that we were not meant to grow spiritually all by ourselves. The Bible is clear that the church or family of God is where we grow together, encourage one another, and worship God together.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth.
2. Commit to family devotions.
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's takeaway commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time talking about organizing our family for success by maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Tonight, we are going to talk about growing spiritually as a family and how our personal spiritual choices and spirituality as a family can strengthen our families. Even if we have never given much thought to our spiritual life before, we can take simple steps that will help us make our families stronger.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth.
2. Commit to family devotions.
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table:

1. What are some things that you do as an individual that reflect your spiritual beliefs?
2. What are some things that you do as a family that reflect your spiritual beliefs?
3. If someone came over for dinner at your house, would they be able to tell what you believe spiritually as a family? Why?

Our family commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

These are the three key ways to grow spiritually. Growing spiritually starts with developing our own relationship with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and going to church to connect with others who want to do the same.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Behavior

**GROWING SPIRITUALLY
AS A FAMILY**

Today we will look at the process of growing spiritually together as a family. It has been said that a family that prays together stays together. While this may not always be true, what is true is that when we access God's power through prayer, changes take place in us and in our families.

Growing spiritually starts with God restoring our broken relationship with Him through our repentance and acceptance of Him. As we walk with God, spend time in His Word, and depend on His power, our lives and actions begin to be more like Him every day.

Families with a strong sense of spirituality tend to celebrate life as a gift and develop the following characteristics in their families:

- The power to love.
- A spirit of gratitude and hope.
- A sense of purpose and support.
- The power to forgive and be forgiven.

As parents, it's important to develop our own relationship with God so we can share our faith with our children and families. It's

out of our own relationship with God that we can begin to develop a home of faith to help our families grow and learn.

In our homes, God should be elevated to a place of importance. We do this in many practical ways, including activities that honor God and others or choices that put God first in our lives. Sometimes this looks like sitting down and reading the Bible in family devotions, and other times it looks like praying at mealtimes or bedtime. We can share Bible verses and stories or put them on the wall, mirror, or refrigerator. It could also include playing Christian music or talking about God when you're driving the car or sitting in your house.

It's important to take every opportunity to practice modeling our faith to our children. Just as a runner in a relay hands off a baton, you can successfully pass on

your faith to your children. They should see you reading God's Word and praying, hear you sharing what you are learning, and see you spending time with other believers and praying with and for them. You never stop being a parent, and the impression you make continues for generations. It's important to continually repeat the basic truths of God to our children.

We must be intentional to bring God into our conversations and situations in our families. Talking about God by asking questions influences the thoughts and actions of our children. For example, when your children have opportunities to make choices, you might ask them how they think God would want them to respond. You can easily bring God into many every day conversations by talking about Him and how He wants us to respond. In fact, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells us, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." What exactly is this faith talk? It's repeating the Law or the Word of God to our children.

DISCUSS

- Why is it important to develop your own relationship with God?
- What are some ways that you are developing your relationship with God?
- What are some practical ways that you could help your children grow spiritually at different age levels? (Discuss the handout sheet and add ideas.)
- What will be the results of discussing faith and spirituality with your children?

All of this sounds like quite a bit of work, but like we discussed before, God never meant for us to be alone in this process of helping our families grow spiritually. He gave us the church, which is filled with

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Scripture SUPPORT

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

people in different stages of spiritual growth to help us along the way. To grow we must stay connected to other believers and rely on them as well as God as a source of support when we don't know what to do. That's why going to church is so important. We get our strength and support from others in the family of God.

We also learn that no one is perfect, and it takes time to become spiritually strong. Just look in the Bible and you will see all kinds of examples of people who failed and yet still grew into people who God used to do His work. What's important is that we start growing and keep growing our whole lives. To help us all begin to think about how we can bring God into our everyday life, we are going to practice some “Faith Conversation Starters.”

Handout

1. Ask parents to get into groups of two or three.
2. Have each person take a turn starting a conversation with the other parents.
3. Discuss in small groups how they might do this in their everyday life.
4. Ask for groups to share their thoughts and ideas. Be ready as the leader to share how you bring God into everyday conversation.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material today during our time together. Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth.
2. Commit to family devotions.
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as you parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

**GROWING SPIRITUALLY
AS A FAMILY**

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of why they were created.
- Help children to be aware of why families were created.
- Help children to be aware of how a family continues to grow spiritually.
- Help children to be aware that their parents are responsible for teaching them about God and what the Bible says.
- Help children to be aware that they are responsible for learning all that their parents teach them about God and what the Bible says.
- Help children to be aware that God wants them and their families to be lights that shine bright for Him.

In earlier lessons we talked about the reason that you were created. When God created you, He placed a very special gift inside of you. The gift that He has given to you is very important and will make the world a better place. We talked about the reason God created families. We learned that God created a special family just for you. He made sure you would have people in your life that would protect you, care for you, and provide for you. But the most important reason God created families was

so that parents would have children, share their faith in God with them, and raise them up to love Him.

God has given parents the responsibility to lead their children to God and teach them how to have a personal relationship with Him (Proverbs 22:6). Yes, He wants to have a relationship with you! God placed you in a Christian family where you would hear about Him, learn about Jesus, and see your parents living their lives according to what

Notes

the Bible says. God wants you to learn to behave and live as the lessons in the Bible teach you as well.

For most of us, the place where we first learn about God is at home. For parents to teach you about God, they must have a relationship with Him first. They must pray, read the Bible, live their lives according to what the Bible tells them to do, go to church to worship God, and spend time with other believers. As parents grow in their relationship with God and gain more knowledge and wisdom about Him, it helps them to create a strong home of faith. Faith in God and in His Son, Jesus strengthens families. Faith in God brings families closer together and gives meaning to our lives. When parents are growing spiritually, they can then instruct their children about what the Bible says. They invite God to be the center of the family, and they bring God into everyday family celebrations and challenges. This gives them confidence to meet any circumstance the family may have (Isaiah 40:31).

When a family is growing spiritually, God is elevated to a place of importance. Some of the ways we can do this is by reading the Bible together, saying a blessing when we eat, or praying at bedtime. We can read Bible stories or listen to Christian music in our homes or when riding in our car. We can talk about God and share Bible verses or put them on the wall or refrigerator.

In the Bible, God tells parents, “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Here God is telling your parents how important it is to teach you about His Word. It is your responsibility to listen to your parents and do your best to learn all that they are teaching you.

We must remember that no family is perfect and growing in our faith in God takes time. But when a family prays and asks God to work in their lives, He

will get involved, and your family will grow stronger and stronger in their faith. When that happens, you will see evidence that God is a part of your family, and your family will enjoy more love, peace, joy, kindness, goodness, patience, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). That is what God wants for all families. As your family grows spiritually, it becomes a bright light shining in the world for God.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the most important reason God created family.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God placed them in a Christian family.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways parents teach their children about God.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways families can place God in the highest point of importance.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the evidence of God's involvement in the spiritual growth of families.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper
Pencils

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/HOHL9CPeGCM>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write three things they want God to do for their family. Now have children take those three things and use them to create a prayer for their family. Have students share if they want to.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper
Pencils

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/QVHUx_EJnUs

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write three things they want God to do for their family.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- Now have children take those three things and use them to create a prayer for their family. Have students share if they want to.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I WILLING TO PRAY TO GOD
EACH DAY OF THIS WEEK?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>My family is a light shining in the world for God!</i>

Healthy Living

Dear Facilitator: The lesson this week is focused on healthy living. Eating right can empower us to do the things that God has asked us to do. It takes time and commitment, but the results are rewarding and life-giving to us and our families.

The lesson incorporates the “Choose My Plate” diagram that shows the portions and descriptions of a healthy diet.

This practical discussion could easily be a time of encouragement for families as they share their ideas to eat healthy and enjoy a fun “Supermarket & Meal Planning” activity.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to supporting healthy eating habits.
2. Commit to lead by example.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s takeaway commitment statement is: I commit to supporting healthy eating habits to take care of my body and help my family through my example.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time focusing on growing spiritually as a family.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's stake a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to supporting healthy eating habits.
2. Commit to lead by example.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to supporting healthy eating habits to take care of my body and help my family through my example.

This evening we are going to talk about how healthy eating, resting, and exercising will benefit our families. Let's have fun and learn something about what we all love—eating!

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

Have a picture at each table of the “Choose My Plate” diagram and ask parents and children to discuss the following questions:

1. What foods are you and your family eating?
2. Where do these foods fit on the diagram?
3. What are some examples of food that fit into these categories?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
<i>Behavior</i>	HEALTHY LIVING

We all enjoy eating, and some of you really enjoy cooking! We are very thankful for the wonderful cooks we have in the audience today. We hope that you will share your tips and ideas for healthy eating and discuss with one another the food recommendations from the “Choose My Plate” diagram.

It’s important to care for our bodies and make sure that we have proper rest, exercise, and healthy eating habits. This takes commitment and time and would probably be helpful to establish as routines in your household. We will focus on what kind of foods we should be feeding our bodies and why as well as the planning, purchasing, and preparation of our food! You will all can practice putting a healthy and affordable meal plan together for the week.

Remember, tonight’s family commitment statement is: I commit to supporting healthy eating habits to take care of my body and help my family through my example.

In the New Testament, in 3 John 1 and 2, John wrote to his friend Gaius that he hoped he was as healthy in body as he was strong

in spirit. It is our hope that we all can help one another be physically healthy as well as spiritually healthy. When God created Adam and Eve, He designed their bodies to eat food from His creation, work in the garden, and rest from their work as He did. We take care of our bodies so that we can do the work God has asked us to do.

There is a saying, “You are what you eat!” If that is even slightly true, it’s important that we take care of our bodies and develop healthy eating habits. Some of you already know this from your own healthy habits. The cells in our bodies amazingly deliver nutrition to the smallest parts of our bodies. We thrive on healthy food that helps our bodies function properly. Just as we can’t put water in a car to make it run, we also can’t put the wrong foods in our bodies and expect them to run well.

Caring for our bodies involves three areas that we will mention tonight: sleeping, exercising, and eating. We all know and agree that it's good to have six to eight hours of sleep regularly to refresh our bodies. It's also important to add some form of exercises to our day. It might be walking to the store or school, lifting weights, or even the work that we do in our jobs. It could also be going to a park or gym as a family. Whatever it is, remember to start with something and be consistent. The best way to be consistent is to find a partner who will do that exercise with you!

To simplify our discussion today, we will be focusing the rest of the time on the three "P's" of healthy eating habits: planning, purchasing, and preparing food.

ACTIVITY

Choose My Plate Diagram

Look at the "Choose My Plate" diagram and talk about each category.

DISCUSS

- What stands out about the "plate" to you?
- What is different or what is the same from what you are currently eating?

Look online at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> for the most up to date research.

DISCUSS

- What are some examples of healthy snacks verses unhealthy snacks?
- What are some healthy food ideas for children?
- What is hard about making healthy meals for the family?
- What ideas and suggestions for healthy food choices do you have that your family already eats or will eat for each of the "Choose My Plate" categories?



Scripture SUPPORT

Ephesians 2:10

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

Psalms 139:14

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

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

3 John 1:2

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

As we are thinking about healthy food options that are enjoyable and affordable, let's talk about the three P's" for healthy eating habits: planning, purchasing, and preparing food.

- 1. Planning.** First, if you go to the supermarket once a week, make your shopping list ahead of time so you don't miss any food that you may need. Plan your menu to "stretch" expensive items like meat into more portions. Consider stews, casseroles, or meals that contain beans instead of meat.
- 2. Purchasing.** Secondly, avoid purchasing rice, beans, and potatoes in box form. Usually the bag is cheaper. Purchase vegetables in their simplest form and in season if possible. Frozen and store brands will usually be cheaper, and coupons and sales will cut food costs.
- 3. Preparing.** Thirdly, prepare large batches of favorite recipes and freeze or eat the leftovers. Since rice takes longer to cook, it can also be cooked in advance and frozen. Add vegetables to casseroles and use overripe fruit for smoothies or baking. Invest in a crock pot. You can leave beans, chili, or other meats in the crock pot in the morning to save time.

Today we are going to have some fun with preparing a week's worth of healthy menu ideas for dinner and see who can come close to staying within the \$50 budget!

Have participants work in groups using the grocery price list to create a shopping list and menu for the dinner meals for the week. The goal is to try to feed dinner to a family of four for \$50 for the week.

How did you do? What were some of your ideas for healthy and affordable dinners?

Eating healthy is a choice we make every day. What we feed our bodies makes a difference in how we can do the work that God has given us to do. I hope everyone has a chance to go home and practice some of these very creative meals that you have put together.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to supporting healthy eating habits.
2. Commit to lead by example.

I commit to supporting healthy eating habits to take care of my body and help my family through my example.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 1:29

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

Genesis 9:3

Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

HEALTHY LIVING

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that God expects them to take care of their bodies and keep their bodies healthy.
- Help children to be aware that they are responsible to make good choices about what and how much food to eat to stay healthy.
- Help children to be aware of how to use the "Choose My Plate" diagram.
- Help children to be aware that God wants their bodies to be healthy so that they can do the work He has for them to do.

The human body is God's complex creation of cells, tissues, organ systems, and intelligence. And when God created our bodies, He called them His masterpiece! You are God's masterpiece! The Bible also tells us that you are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).

God says that we are his handiwork, created to do good works for him (Ephesians 2:10). God created your body, put a special gift inside of you, and placed you on the earth. God is excited that you are on the earth right now! God has a very special plan for your life, and He wants you to stay healthy and grow up to live out the plan He has for you (Jeremiah 29:11).

God has placed you in a loving family to protect you, care for you, and teach you about Him. God has given you parents to make sure you will have everything you need to be healthy and grow into the person He created you to be. God wants you to live a safe, healthy, happy, and peaceful life. When families pray and seek God's help and read the Bible for guidance, God shows us how it is possible to do just that. The Bible can guide us in every subject—even in how to keep our bodies healthy!

Since you were a baby, your parents have bought, cooked, and fed you the food you need to be strong and healthy. When you were a baby, you really didn't have much

choice in what foods your parents chose for you. You were totally dependent on them. As you are growing older, however, it is becoming more of your responsibility to learn the nutritional facts about the foods you eat and how it affects your health. It is also up to you to find out what else helps your body stay fit so that you are able to do what God created you to do. Just as you can't put water in a car to make it run, we also can't put the wrong foods in our bodies and expect them to run well.

God wants us to take care of the magnificent bodies He has given us. We care for our bodies by getting enough sleep, and for you that means seven to eight hours a night. It's important to include some type of daily exercise to keep your body strong. Your exercise could be walking to school and back home, riding your bike to the store, or even playing a sport. Something else that is important is eating the right foods to help your body stay healthy. In the Bible, God lets us know He wants us to be healthy (3 John 1:2). All these activities are critical to taking care of our ourselves, but today we are going to focus on what types of foods we should eat to keep our bodies healthy. We will also learn about how much of each food is the right amount.

In the Bible, God talks to us about the food He has given us for nourishment. In Genesis 1:29, He says, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." In Genesis 9:3, He says, "Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything." So, we know that God has provided every food we need to stay in good shape.

Let's look at a guide that can help you make good food choices and eat healthy at home and at school. It's called the "Choose My Plate" diagram. It tells us that we should always fill one half of our plate with vegetables and fruits. One fourth of our plate should be grains such as bread, pasta, corn, flour tortillas, crackers, oatmeal, and breakfast cereals. The last fourth of our plate should be for protein foods.

Healthy protein foods include lean cuts of meat like chicken, fish, and turkey. These are better for you than foods like lunchmeat, hotdogs, chicken nuggets, or fish sticks. Surprisingly, beans are also a protein food your parents may include on your family menu. Although children may like a lot of the not-so-healthy choices, it is important to know that you can have them sometimes but not all the time. The Bible tells us that it is good to practice moderation in eating.

You can honor your parents by letting them know that you are grateful for whatever food they provide for the family. It is not an easy job to shop for and prepare food to satisfy the appetites of several people. Perhaps your parents will let you help plan some family meals and go shopping with them to purchase the groceries to prepare those meals. This will give you a head start on learning how to plan, purchase, and prepare food for yourself and the family. That will come in handy in the future!

Eating the right foods and the right amount is a choice we make every day. Along with exercise and the proper amount of rest, what we feed our bodies is very important to staying healthy. When we make all these practices a part of our daily plan, it makes it possible for us to stay healthy and continue to do the work that God has given to us to do.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about why God says we are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God places a special gift inside of each person.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God wants us to take care of our bodies.
- Lead children in a discussion about how the Bible can guide us in how to keep our bodies healthy.
- Lead children in a discussion about how praying for ourselves can help us keep our bodies healthy.
- Lead children in discussion about their responsibility to learn about nutrition facts of food.

- Lead children in discussion about other things they need to do to keep their bodies healthy.
- Lead children in a discussion about the foods God says He has given us for nourishment.
- Lead children in discussion about the “Choose My Plate” diagram.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the not-so-healthy food choices that need to be eaten in moderation.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Pencils or markers

A blank “My Plate” template (At the bottom of My Plate template is a space for writing exercise plan and sleep plan.)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/9Fr1iDqemjY>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Developing a Healthy Living Action Plan

- Have children fill out a “What’s on My Plate” template by writing in the foods they would choose for each section. (If children cannot write, they can draw pictures.)
- Next, have children write a plan of what exercise they can do each day.
- Then have children calculate what time they should go to bed to get their needed amount of sleep.
- Finally, have children share their “Action Plan.”

Notes

Notes

AGES 12-16

Materials

Pencils or markers

A blank "My Plate" template (At the bottom of My Plate template is a space for writing exercise plan and sleep plan.)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/IQRT3DkTB1w>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Developing a Healthy Living Action Plan

- Have children fill out a "What's on My Plate" template by writing in the foods they would choose for each section. (If children cannot write, they can draw pictures.)
- Next, have children write a plan of what exercise they can do each day.
- Then, have children calculate what time they should go to bed to get their needed amount of sleep.
- Finally, have children share their "Action Plan."



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING WHAT I SHOULD
TO KEEP MY BODY HEALTHY?

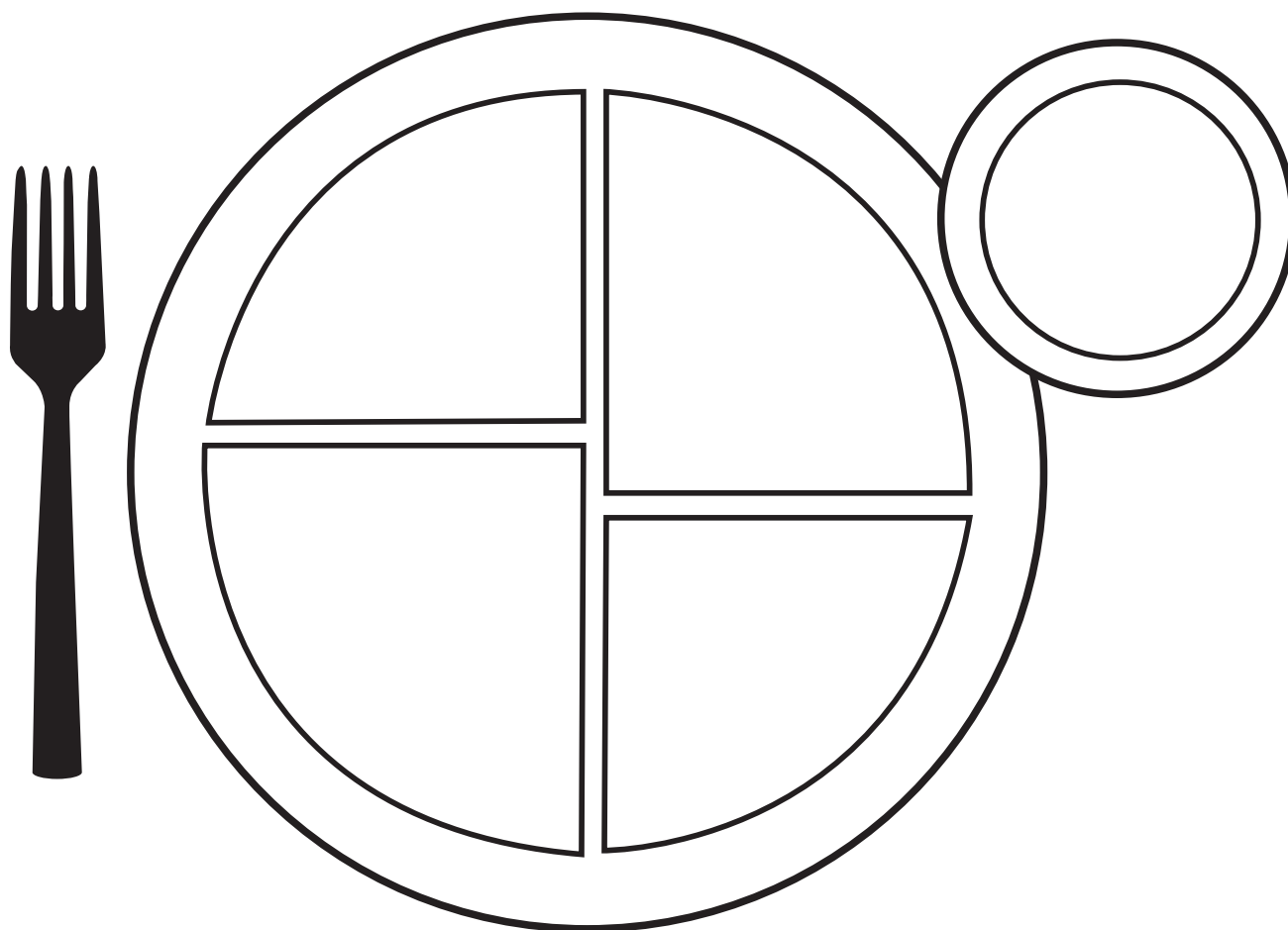
CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I keep my body healthy,
so I can do the things
that God wants me to do!*



What exercise will you do each day? _____

What time should you go to bed to get the amount of sleep that you need?

Financial Health

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how families successfully communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on family financial health. We will learn how our emotions and attitudes about money affect our spending habits.

It's not unusual to have or think we have money problems, but often the problem is not with money itself, but our attitudes towards money.

When we are discontent with what we have, we seek more and more and often live beyond our means, causing true financial problems. Instead, we can choose to live like Paul, who tell us in Philippians 4:11-13 how he has learned to be content in any and every situation.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to contentment.
2. Commit to budget, save, and give.

This week's lesson also includes take-home budgeting and saving activities. You can briefly explain these activities to participants prior to closing the session.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's takeaway commitment statement is: I commit to cultivating an attitude of contentment about financial matters, and I encourage my family to budget, save, and give.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about healthy living and how eating right can empower us to do the things God has called us to do.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*


 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to contentment.
2. Commit to budget, save, and give.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to cultivating an attitude of contentment about financial matters, and I encourage my family to budget, save, and give.

Family & Table Talk *20 minutes*

 **Say:** Today we are going to talk about how our families can become more financially healthy simply by working to change our attitudes about money. We will also discuss effective ways to

budget, save, and give. As you enjoy your dinner this evening, take time to talk about these questions at your table:

1. Name an item you have purchased that did not make you as happy as you thought it would.
2. Why did you purchase it?
3. How did you think it would make you feel?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Behavior

FINANCIAL HEALTH

We all know how important money is in this world. It is what allows us to provide for our families and to purchase what we need to survive. But, we know too that, because of its importance in our lives, money can also become a major stressor and cause of conflict and discontent in our family.

It is crucial that we find a healthy balance when it comes to money. We must learn how we can stay in control of our priorities while working to supply our families’ needs and still choosing to be happy and satisfied with what we have.

Today, we are going to talk about our attitudes toward money and simple ways to work toward an objective of family financial health in our households.

Throughout the evening, keep in mind that today’s family commitment statement is: I commit to cultivating an attitude of contentment about financial matters, and I encourage my family to budget, save, and give.

On the surface, it seems that our financial worries could be eased if we only had a little bit more money, doesn’t it? But, the lesson we want to focus on tonight is that

financial strife and discontentment often is not because of our income level or amount of material possessions. Think about Adam and Eve in Genesis. God gave them a paradise filled with everything they could ever need, yet they still wanted more. They let their desire for more become so strong that it felt like a need, and it caused them to be discontent with all that they had. The same can be seen today in famous athletes and celebrities who end of up facing incomprehensible financial woes because they could not be happy with all they had.

It is not unusual to have or think we have money problems, but, as you can see, sometimes our problem is not money itself but our attitudes toward money. When we are discontent with what we have, we seek more and more and often live beyond our means to get it, causing true financial problems. Instead, we can choose to live

like Paul, who said in Philippians 4:11-13, “For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

We live in a society that is constantly telling us that we need more. If we believe this message, we can easily become consumed by consumption and begin a never-ending cycle certain to leave us feeling empty at the end of the day.

But, the good news is that we don’t have to fall into that trap. Our attitude about money is a choice, and while working toward our family’s financial health, we can choose to be satisfied and content with the things that we have.

DISCUSS

Like Adam and Eve, sometimes we feel like we must have more! We need those shiny new shoes, or we want that new phone. But, do those material goods really content us like we think they will? Or, do we just feel like we need the next new thing as soon as the fleeting excitement of the purchase wears off?

In your group, discuss these topics:

- What are a few material items that you are proud to own? How do they make you feel? Do these items make you feel content and happy every day?
- Name a few intangible blessings that you are grateful for such as your faith or your family. How do these blessings make you feel? Do they bring you contentment and happiness every day?

Products do not bring happiness. Instead, products can lead us to feeling discontent and always wanting more. That is a sin. Realizing this truth makes it much easier to choose an attitude of contentment about money and to begin to analyze our spending. This is a major step on the road to family financial health.



Scripture SUPPORT

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Deuteronomy 15:10

Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.

Philippians 4:11

For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Of course, there are many things that our families need, and we must work to have the money to provide these necessary items. We need to have shelter, food, water, transportation, clothing, electricity, and many other things to survive. But, what about the things that we don't need? Why do we spend money on them? What feeling are we trying to meet with these unessential purchases?

Sometimes, of course, if we have the money available, it is okay to spend sensibly on items that we want.

The key is to analyze the reason we want to purchase them and determine whether its value outweighs the cost. We also need to look at the emotions driving our spending habits. Are we buying a new outfit because we feel sad or unhappy and think the purchase will cheer us up? Are we buying a new television because we feel angry at a relative who seems to always be showing off his or her new things? To analyze this process, let's look at Mary, a fictional mother on a budget, and a random selection of purchases she made throughout the week.

ACTIVITY

Spending Analysis Activity

1. What did you think about Mary's spending choices?
2. With the items that Mary wanted but did not need, what emotions do you think were behind her spending?
3. If Mary had chosen an attitude of contentment about money and material goods, do you think her spending choices would have been different in any way?

When it comes to our spending choices, we need to take time to look at our monthly net income and compare it to our necessary monthly expenses. This will help us establish a solid budget to follow to make sure we are being good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. If our budget shows that there is going to be money left over after the necessary expenses are paid, we can determine if the best use of that money

would be to save it for the future, to spend it on wanted items, or to give it to a good cause.

Whenever we are blessed with abundance, we are called to share our resources with those in need. Of course, that does not just mean money. Even if we are not able to give financially, we can always find ways to give our time and talents to help a good cause. As you think this week about choosing an attitude of contentment about money, remember that we should be content with what we have but never complacent with what we give!

This week get together with your family and come up with a way that you can give to a good cause together. I think you will find the joy of giving long outlast the excitement of purchasing material things.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson. Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to contentment.
2. Commit to budget, save, and give.

I commit to cultivating an attitude of contentment about financial matters, and I encourage my family to budget, save, and give.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Philippians 4:12

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Psalms 37:4

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Matthew 6:24

No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Psalms 24:1

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that everything belongs to God.
- Help children to be aware that God has promised to provide for us.
- Help children to be aware that prayer is how we ask God to meet our needs.
- Help children to be aware that giving is very important to God.
- Help children to be aware that God wants us to budget our money—to save, give, and spend.
- Help children to be aware that money can't buy the most important things in life.

Did you know that money can be a good thing or a bad thing in our life? Money itself is not the problem. The problem comes when a person loves money more than they love God. The Bible tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil and has caused people who love it a lot of grief (1Timothy 6:10).

God knows we need money to buy what we need in life. He also wants us to be able to buy some of the things we want for our pleasure and enjoyment. But God wants us to only use money the way He intended it to be used. The key here is having a healthy attitude about money—how it is to be used

and the importance we give it in our lives. When we think and talk about money and how we use it, we are talking about our financial health.

As Christians we want to know what the Bible says about financial health. In a world where it seems like the goal of too many people is to be rich, we need to see what God says about money. The world has many beautiful and interesting things to get our attention. If we are not careful, we can lose our focus on why we were created and start chasing after money and the things it can buy. We need to keep our focus on God and remember that God has a special plan for

our lives. We need to remember that God wants us to pray and ask Him to lead and guide us in every area of our lives, including our finances. God has promised us that if we will do that, He will always make sure we have everything we need to care for ourselves and to be a blessing to others. Philippians 4:19 says, “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.”

God tells us to use our money to help others. God has a different way of doing things. We live in a world where many people believe that in order to save a lot of money for yourself, you should keep all the money you get and not share any of it. But, in the Bible, God tells us that when we give to others, we will receive what we need in return. In Luke 6:38, Jesus says to us, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” The Bible also says that God loves a cheerful giver: “Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to” (Deuteronomy 15:10).

Unfortunately, we live in a world where many people believe having a lot of money will give them a good life and solve all their problems. There are some problems money can solve. Money can buy many beautiful and wonderful things, and those things can bring you temporary happiness. Money can buy cars, boats, houses, expensive vacations, toys, clothes, and other things.

Television commercials try to convince us that we need all those things to have a good life. But God wants us to find our peace, joy, and happiness from things that money can't buy. Money can't buy the most important things like the love of your parents, siblings, or friends. Money can't buy good health. Steve Jobs was one of the richest men in the world, but his money couldn't keep him from dying from cancer. So, we need to value money but never believe that our happiness comes from money.

Notes

In Philippians 4:11-12, Paul, a follower of Jesus said, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." This scripture is telling us that while it is okay to work to get some extra special things we desire, God wants us to learn to be grateful and satisfied with the many blessings that He has already given us.

God knows we need money to live, so He promises to be our source no matter what our need is.

Your parents must pay for a home for your family to live and a car to get you to the places you need to go. They also need money to pay for food, clothing, electricity, water, and many other things. God gives your parents health and strength to be able to work and earn the money they need. Then He gives them the responsibility to budget their money so that they will be able to pay for what your family needs and even for some of the things you want.

God wants us to love Him and trust Him to provide everything we need. Psalm 37:4 says, "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." God wants us to love only Him and put our hope in Him alone... not money. God says it is impossible to love money and love Him too (Matthew 6:24). When we care too much about money and the things it can buy, it can steal our heart from God and what is truly important in life. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

When it comes to money, we must remember that everything belongs to God. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Whenever we need money or other material things, we need to pray, and our Father God will answer our prayers according to what His will is for our life.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how money can be good or bad.
- Lead children in a discussion about what financial health means.
- Lead children in a discussion about the meaning, “The best things in life are free.”
- Lead children in a discussion about what God says about the importance of giving.
- Lead children in a discussion about what God says about being content and grateful.
- Lead children in a discussion about what God promises us about Him meeting our needs.
- Lead children in a discussion about why the Bible says you can’t love God and money.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper or tag board

Markers

Camera or iPad (video)

Have children view YouTube:

“What Makes You Happy?”

<https://youtu.be/q6z-yZwfS5k>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children pick one thing that makes them happy (content). Have them write it on a paper in big letters. Then have children hold up their paper and tell why that makes them happy.
- Videotape if possible.
- Play back for the children and discuss.

Notes

Notes

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper or tag board

Markers

Camera or iPad (video)

Have children view YouTube:

“What Makes You Happy?”

<https://youtu.be/q6z-yZwfS5k>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children pick one thing that makes them happy (content). Have them write it on a paper in big letters. Then have children hold up their paper and tell why that makes them happy.
- Videotape if possible.
- Play back for the children and discuss.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

IS MY LEVEL OF GIVING MY TIME
AND RESOURCES TO OTHERS PLEASING TO GOD?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I am a generous and cheerful giver!</i>

FINANCIAL HEALTH

With the 52-Week Money Challenge, you start with what you have and begin to move towards abundance. This plan quickly gained popularity on the internet in early 2013. It is a simple savings plan that gradually grows. But, if you are disciplined to follow it, you can begin to move your family finances towards abundance. You can adjust the weekly deposit amount up or down based on your own circumstances. However, whatever amount you choose in the beginning you should continue to grow by that amount each week.

Weekly Deposit Amount: \$1.00 Total Saved in One Year: \$1,378.00

52-WEEK MONEY CHALLENGE

Week	Deposit Amount	Account Balance	Week	Deposit Amount	Account Balance
1	\$1.00	\$1.00	27	\$27.00	\$378.00
2	\$2.00	\$3.00	28	\$28.00	\$406.00
3	\$3.00	\$6.00	29	\$29.00	\$435.00
4	\$4.00	\$10.00	30	\$30.00	\$465.00
5	\$5.00	\$15.00	31	\$31.00	\$496.00
6	\$6.00	\$21.00	32	\$32.00	\$528.00
7	\$7.00	\$28.00	33	\$33.00	\$561.00
8	\$8.00	\$36.00	34	\$34.00	\$595.00
9	\$9.00	\$45.00	35	\$35.00	\$630.00
10	\$10.00	\$55.00	36	\$36.00	\$666.00
11	\$11.00	\$66.00	37	\$37.00	\$703.00
12	\$12.00	\$78.00	38	\$38.00	\$741.00
13	\$13.00	\$91.00	39	\$39.00	\$780.00
14	\$14.00	\$105.00	40	\$40.00	\$820.00
15	\$15.00	\$120.00	41	\$41.00	\$861.00
16	\$16.00	\$136.00	42	\$42.00	\$903.00
17	\$17.00	\$153.00	43	\$43.00	\$946.00
18	\$18.00	\$171.00	44	\$44.00	\$990.00
19	\$19.00	\$190.00	45	\$45.00	\$1,035.00
20	\$20.00	\$210.00	46	\$46.00	\$1,081.00
21	\$21.00	\$231.00	47	\$47.00	\$1,128.00
22	\$22.00	\$253.00	48	\$48.00	\$1,128.00
23	\$23.00	\$276.00	49	\$49.00	\$1,176.00
24	\$24.00	\$300.00	50	\$50.00	\$1,275.00
25	\$25.00	\$325.00	51	\$51.00	\$1,326.00
26	\$26.00	\$351.00	52	\$52.00	\$1,378.00

Problem Solving

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how families successfully communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we will be learning about problem-solving skills which can give us the power to shape our lives. You are working to build strong families, and it's important to help everyone understand that strong families are not free of conflict, but that they do work together to address problems.

We are encouraged in Matthew 11:28-30 to come to God when we are tired and burdened, and He will give us rest. These words can give our families peace to get through the difficulties of life as we understand that God is beside us and for us. He is there to help us through our circumstances. As you share today, you will be focusing on helping families practice the skills of identifying and addressing problems.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements.


This week's commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we discussed financial health and how to budget, save, and give.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's stake a few minutes to read our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: Tonight, at your tables, we are going to talk about what stresses you and your family! Before you get too overwhelmed, remember that we are going to talk about some skills tonight that will help us through these stressful times.

- What are some problems that cause stress to you and your family?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Behavior	PROBLEM SOLVING

How many of you had a lot to discuss at dinner? We all have circumstances that are stressful or hard to handle in our families. Often, these stresses are problems for us. Sometimes it is easy to address problems, and other times it is much more difficult. Wouldn't it be great if there were a way to successfully cooperate as families to solve problems?

Today we are going to discuss how we identify problems and how to address them. It is our hope that each of you will go home with problem-solving tools to help your families.

Our commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

We get stressed when we know we have a problem and we don't know what to do! Most of the time families can handle difficulties that come their way, but every now and then people get stuck. It helps to use a process to solve those problems. I'm going to mention a few examples of problems that might cause us stress as I blow up this balloon.

ACTIVITY

Balloon Illustration

Facilitator takes a balloon and blows a little more air into the balloon each time he mentions a difficulty below.

- Our daughter was suspended from school.
- We received a notice from the bank about some overdrawn checks.
- On the same day, our landlord told us she is raising our rent.
- We noticed that the washing machine is leaking again.
- The car was dented today.
- I found out that I might be getting laid off from my job.

Is this how you feel sometimes? I know I do!

Sometimes we can identify a problem quickly such as having less money because of the unexpected bill from fixing the car. Other times, identifying the problem is more difficult. For example, perhaps my daughter getting suspended is not the actual problem—just the result of another problem.

God understands all our problems and asks us to come to Him. He says in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gently and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Identifying problems start with asking questions about the matter that concerns you. For example, why are there overdrawn checks in my account? Maybe it is because I am not recording what is happening with my money. Once I ask myself enough questions and have decided what the problem is, I can address the problem. This is part of the work it takes to identify your problems.

Talking about problems also helps us identify problems because it helps us think more clearly. If you are the type of person who can't talk right away, try writing down a few thoughts first. As you talk through your problems with family, don't forget to ask God for help and wisdom to understand the problem. It isn't a sign of weakness to ask for help. We are building strong families together, and it's important to remember that strong families are not free of conflict, but there is strength in working together to identify and address problems.

ACTIVITY

Strength in Numbers Illustration

Instructor holds up a small stick.

Any one person, under enough stress, will break (break the stick).

- When you bring together more resources and more people, you can manage a lot more stress without breaking. (Take two sticks

Notes

together and try to break them. Illustrate how much harder that is to do.)

- Who are some of the people or resources that you can turn to for help? (After each answer, add another stick to the original two sticks and then illustrate how difficult it is break them as a group).
- A healthy Christian family will join to solve problems. They speak up to ask for and offer help to one another, and then they listen to each other and cooperate to find solutions.

Addressing problems begins with identifying the result or goal that we want to achieve, and the next step involves coming up with solutions and making a plan of action. Determining the goal, or what we want to see happen, is usually easy, but getting to the goal can take some work. That's why it's important to follow a plan to get the results we want. It is also important to pray for wisdom and rely on God's strength. When we address problems, we can follow this simple plan:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Write out the desired goal or end results.
3. List solutions and pick one.
4. Determine a plan of action.

ACTIVITY

Problem Solving Worksheet

Put people together in groups and distribute the worksheet. Instruct each group to work through the worksheet. They should pick a problem that can be worked through in 10-15 minutes.

You may want to give some ideas such as how to save money for a family purchase or how to get chores done or how to improve grades. As the instructor, you may want to come up with some ideas that fit your group.

Ask:

1. What was your favorite part of the problem-solving process?
2. What did you do that helped your family/group work toward a solution?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.
Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

As we close this lesson, let's remember that strong families solve problems by working together to identify and address problems. You are a strong family, and tonight our family commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Psalms 91:15

He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Behavior		PROBLEM SOLVING	

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that all families deal with problems.
- Help children to be aware that God wants them to pray to Him when they face problems.
- Help children to be aware of steps to take when problem solving.
- Help children to be aware that solving problems within their family is teaching them how to solve problems they will face in the future.

Did you know there is no perfect family? Every family will face problem situations. No matter how hard we try to avoid these situations, problems will still show up from time to time. Problems can be stressful for both parents and children in the family. When God created family, He knew that they would face problems that lead to stress, so God gave us a way to solve our problems. He tells us to turn to Him, to pray, and to not worry.

In Matthew 11:28, God says, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” When the stress of problems becomes too difficult to handle, it gives us peace to know that God told us to

not worry but to stay calm. When we make God an important part of our family, He has promised that He will never leave us or turn His back on us (Deuteronomy 31:6). God’s promise should give us confidence that He is there to help us, and with Him helping us, we can solve our problems!

As a family, and when a problem arises, the first step is to identify the problem. It is impossible to solve a problem if you don’t know what the problem is. Some problems are easy to figure out and solve, and others take more time. Sometimes a problem is the kind that only your parents can solve such as the car needing repairs. Other times there will be a problem that children can

solve like getting a behavior report at school for not completing a homework assignment. Sometimes a problem may require the entire family to figure out a solution such as learning to turn off lights to lower the electric bill. In this situation, everyone works on solving the problem as a team.

Once the family members who are involved with the problem are ready, they need to talk about what they believe is causing the problem, write down the goal or result they want, and discuss possible solutions and pick one. They can then make a plan of action, which is the second step to solving the problem.

When a problem confronts us, God wants us to not worry about it; instead, He wants us to pray and ask for His help in understanding the problem and figuring out a solution. He tells us if we do this, we can have peace while He is helping us fix our problem situation. Whatever difficulty we are facing, God promises that He will be with us when we are in trouble, so we should have no fear. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

You will experience problems and challenges in your life. The first place you will learn to deal with problems that happen in your life is at home with your family. Remember your family is your training camp! And you are being trained to figure out what to do in tough situations, which is very important.

As you grow and learn to solve problems within your family, you are being prepared to solve problems you may face as an adult in the future. Because God loves us so much, He put families together so that when family members do experience problems, they have a support team to pray for them, encourage them, and cheer for them as they find solutions (Galatians 6:2). When families love God and one another and peacefully solve their difficulties, He has promised that everything—even problems—will work together for good (Romans

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8:28). And as family members work together to solve problems, it will strengthen their family bond and cause them to grow even closer.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how no family is perfect.
- Lead children in a discussion about problems that cause stress in families.
- Lead children in a discussion about how God tells us not to worry when we face problems.
- Lead children in a discussion about God's promises to us when we are facing problems.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the types of problems families may face.
- Lead children in a discussion about how learning to solve problems now is preparing them for the future.
- Lead children in a discussion about what families can do to support members going through problem situations.



Activities

AGES 4-11 & 12-16

Materials

Camera or iPad with camera

Box or Basket

Index cards (10-15 with problem scenarios written on them)

Place children in small groups.

From a box or basket, allow each group to draw an index card with a problem scenario written on it. Instruct children to use the strategies written in the lesson to solve the problem on the card. Allow three to five minutes.

(See list of problem scenarios.)

DISCUSS

Problem Solving Strategies

1. Talk about what they think is causing the problem.
2. Write down the desired goal or result.
3. Discuss possible solutions to the problem.
4. Pick a solution and plan of action.

Once groups have solved the problem, ask each group to come in front and explain what their problem was and how they used the strategies to solve it. Film their presentation. Then replay for them to view.

(If time permits, the group can pick another card and film another problem scenario being solved.)

Notes




CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHEN I HAVE A PROBLEM
DO I ASK FOR GOD'S HELP?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat;</i>
	<i>Because I love God, all things are working together for my good!</i>

Spiritual Development

Dear Facilitator: In Luke 2:52 it says, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

While we might understand that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world, it might be hard to understand that while Jesus was God, He was also man. In other words, just as babies must learn and grow, Jesus also had to learn and grow. Today I smile to myself when singing the song “Away In a Manger.” The lyrics in the second verse are as follows:

*The cattle are lowing
The poor baby wakes
But little LORD Jesus
No crying He makes*

Is it true that Jesus never cried? For an infant, crying is not a sin; it is a way to communicate. Personally, I believe Jesus cried. He also had diapers that had to be changed, and He had to learn how to roll over, crawl, and walk.

I do not know about you, but for some reason Jesus learning and growing gives me hope for my future. He truly understands what it takes to be stretched physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

This week we are going to focus on how we grow spiritually. This is called spiritual development.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

continued

Notes


Participants will:

1. State stages of spiritual development.
2. Identify family member's stage of spiritual development.
3. Develop ways to help the process of spiritual development.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning how to identify and solve problems with humility and grace.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** (Adapted from Bruinsma's work) What is this (hold up an unsharpened pencil)? What needs to be done to get its full use? (Sharpen it.)

A pencil is made up of cedar wood and graphite. When you sharpen a pencil, you gradually peel away the wood so that the graphite of the pencil is exposed.

A pencil will not work well until the graphite is sharp and exposed.

Sometimes, when we learn new things, we must work hard and get rid of things that are getting in our way, like the wood surrounding the graphite of a pencil.

When a baby is born, she will waive her arms in circles, looking like she is reaching for nothing. As the baby grows and develops, the movements become more deliberate, and eventually she can grab and reach for items successfully.


All people grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, and even spiritually.

Today we are going to focus on how we grow spiritually.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. State stages of spiritual development.
2. Identify family member's stage of spiritual development.
3. Develop ways to help the process of spiritual development.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Share memories of how you learned a new task.

1. What went well?
2. What kind of obstacles did you encounter?
3. What would you do differently if you had to do it all over again?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

Luke 2:52

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

1 Peter 2:2-5

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the LORD is good. As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:9-12

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the LORD and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Think about what a baby does to learn how to walk.
Let's come up with a list of steps.

DISCUSS

1. Baby is born.
2. Baby reaches.
3. Baby scoots and crawls.
4. Baby pulls herself up.
5. Baby walks.

While we know and understand that people need to develop certain skills to be strong enough to walk, there is a development that we often neglect. It is spiritual development.

Just as a tree trunk develops new rings through the years, faith also develops a variety of stages over time as a person matures. Each stage passes and builds upon the previous stage.

(Adapted from "Will Our Children Have Faith?" by John Westerhoff III.; found: <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com>).

Christian faith, like the human body, has an expected pattern of growth and development. The different stages are usually addressed at certain ages and can (like physical growth) be delayed with faith development ending before the final stage is reached.

Experienced Faith

- The key to experienced faith in early childhood is observation and reaction. Children observe love and faith in their interaction with adults and react to what they experience. At this stage, they are too young to consciously think about faith, but they demonstrate unwavering faith.
- The needs at this stage are to:
 - Experience trust.
 - Experience love.
 - Experience acceptance.

Little children need a few trusted and loving adults in their lives. Sometimes pets provide the love and acceptance adults are too busy to give.

- Foster faith at this stage through warmth, hugs, active listening, and countless experiences of unconditional love.

Belonging Faith

- The key to faith for a primary-age child is a sense of belonging. Children of this age have a keen sense of the order of things. They are also great “joiners.” They want to belong to a church that is bigger than their family and to clubs within the church.
- The needs for children at this stage of faith development are to:
 - Experience a sense of authority. They are satisfied to have their “why” questions answered with responses like, “because the Bible” or “because the Adventist Church” says so.
 - Experience the community they belong to. Stories of God’s working in Bible times and in the beginnings of their church feed the child’s growing faith.
 - Experience awe and wonder, which are partly what worship is about.
 - Experience a sense of being wanted at church, being accepted by their teachers and peers, and being missed when absent.
- Foster faith by filling the above needs through stories, drama, art, and creative worship experiences in a warm, accepting atmosphere.

Searching Faith

- The key element of the adolescent’s searching faith is critical judgment. For the pre-adolescent, quoting authorities is not enough. They want to examine all the information for themselves.
- The needs at this stage of faith development are to:
 - Establish their own identity. They are questioning and examining their beliefs, their lifestyle, their appearance, all authority, and anything they identify with to define themselves.

Notes

Notes

- Know that the religion of the head is equal to the religion of the heart. This compels teens to ask searching questions that challenge the adult's beliefs. They become critical of any explanations that cannot be supported by logic, good sense, and scientific inquiry. Adults need to accept the questions without feeling threatened, working with the adolescents to find the answers.
- Be needed in the faith community.
- Foster faith in adolescents through serious Bible study, short-term journeys, mission trips, and service opportunities.

Owned Faith

- The keys to a lasting faith for the adult are: conversion, witnessing, and discipleship.
- The needs for adults at this stage of faith development are to:
 - Be an example.
 - Find opportunities to witness by word and by lifestyle.
 - Help others put faith to work.
- Foster faith through teaching opportunities.

DISCUSS

- Where are you on the tree trunk?
- Where do you want to be?
- How can you get there?
- Where are your children?
- How can you help them get there?

We have a handout that has been adapted from “The Discipline Guide for Children’s Ministry.” As we look through the chart, we can find resources or strategies on how to enhance spiritual development for toddlers through 12 years of age. There are also resources for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social needs.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. State stages of spiritual development.
2. Identify family member's stage of spiritual development.
3. Develop ways to help the process of spiritual development.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional	Social	Spiritual
T's & 2	Move, explore, experience	Need to see, touch, taste, smell, and hear. Don't rush, attention two minutes	Test limits, routine. Teacher needs to maintain calm, be gentle	Copypcats, repeat, will frequently invade others, selfish, solitary play	God cares for you. God made everything.
Preschool	Constantly in motion, begin to use small motor skills, make sure projects do not frustrate, noisy	Read pictures, imaginations, help them distinguish between fantasy and reality, 3-4 minutes attention, nonsense jokes/ words, questioning, listen patiently and help them communicate, follow no more than 2-3 instructions at a time, example of adults	Desire to please adults, helpers, need to be thanked, exhibit emotions freely and intensely.	Sense of group, watching closely that everyone in the group receives fair treatment, rules enforced consistently, parallel play, focused on themselves, unrealistic to think of them being unselfish, aware of bully games	Practice interacting and applying Bible truths that have social implications
K	Full of energy and need exercise	Let me do it, attention 5-6 minutes, memorization is not a good thing—their good memories exceed their ability to understand—they are parroting, enjoy completing stories over and over again, spell out expectations clearly, begin to understand cause and effect, here and now	Please and again approval of teacher, want attention, fragile emotions, difficulty with pretending, greet each child	Conscious of peers, fair, class rules stated clearly, girls advanced than boys, competition detrimental	Authority figures help create their concept of God. Discipline with affection, love, and forgiveness
6 & 7	Constantly moving, because in the process of developing control of large muscles these kids are unable to move slowly, awkward so get dirty easily, active-learning experiences	Adventurers, variety of activities, repetition, 6-8 minutes attention span, kinesthetic learners, beginning to read, literal thinkers, can learn to sing in tune	Desire friendships with adults, unrealistic expectations of themselves—tell them to not be discouraged, do not compare, express emotions physically, worriers	Want to be first, difficulty taking turns and need opportunities to practice, insensitive to feelings of peers, hypersensitive about themselves, eliminate competitive activities, cooperative activities	Difficulties with abstract—hands on—wash dirty hands for sins forgiven, focus can snag on aspect of story—don't be too elaborate, give actions stories, troubled if don't turn out fair

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional	Social	Spiritual
8 & 9	Enjoy games	Can work independently, in-depth projects, if passive too long will act out, atmosphere of trust, careful to damage self-confidence	Demonstrate how new experiences are relevant, attempts tasks beyond abilities and then becomes upset, looking for place to belong	Concerned about truth, avoid highly competitive activities where child feels like a loser, can begin reasoning with children in discipline, empathetic, resent opposite sex, need friend of same gender	Begin evaluating ethics and actions by biblical standards
10 & 11	Growth spurts, fatigue, emotions, extremely sensitive, given sufficient quiet time to rest and recover	Interested in everything so easily distracted, daydreaming, concept of time, need to repeatedly remind them of deadlines to register for upcoming events, making transition from concrete to abstract	Frequent mood changes and out of control, anger will emerge as result of fatigue	Very close to friend of same gender, working with mixed groups gives opportunity to learn how to relate, service projects	New or renewed commitments to God and church, lost cause to keep these kids from talking to one another

Capehart, J, Gordon, W., & West, B (1997). The Discipline Guide for Children's Ministry. Loveland: Group.

Ages 4-16	40 minutes
<h1>Student Training</h1>	
<i>Faith Formation</i>	SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives

- Help children be aware of the need for spiritual growth and development.
- Help children be aware of what stage of spiritual development they are in.
- Help children be aware of things they can do to grow spiritually.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about growing spiritually.

We have learned that God created man and woman in His image. That means that we are made to resemble God. God is amazing, and because we are made to be like Him, He wants us to be amazing too. He has placed inside each one of us special gifts and abilities that He intends to use in the wonderful plan He has for our lives.

In the Bible, John 4:24 tells us that God is a spirit being. And since we are created in His image we are spirit beings too. On the inside of your body is where your spirit lives. God communicates with us through our spirit. Job 32:8 says, "But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of Almighty, that gives them understanding."

When people accept Christ Jesus as their personal Savior, it is their spirit that is

born again and becomes a new creation. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts as our helper, teacher, comforter, and guide. Our physical body looks the same, but the spirit inside of us changes that very day. The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Essentially, we become a newborn baby in the spirit.

Just as we learn what is best to keep our physical bodies strong, healthy, and growing, it is just as important to learn what will make our spirit grow strong and healthy. If your spirit is healthy, then the Holy Spirit can guide you along the path that God has planned for your life. We need to make sure our new spirit is being

nourished with the things of God. In the Bible, it says, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). We need the help of the Holy Spirit so that like Jesus, we can grow wiser and more mature in the things of God.

As we involve ourselves in activities that teach us about God and His Son Jesus, our spirit will become more and more like them. It is important that we talk to God each day and thank Him for our blessings and ask for His advice and help as we face life’s challenges. Talking to God is praying. God loves it when we spend time with Him in prayer! There are other ways that we can develop our relationship with God and help our spirit grow like hearing and reading Bible stories, memorizing Bible verses, and watching videos about Jesus.

As you get into your teen years, God wants to be an important part of your life. It makes Him smile when His teenage children choose to spend time with Him in their own private devotion time.

Being involved in church is also critical to growing spiritually. Sabbath should be a special day for God’s children because it provides a formal opportunity for us to worship God and fellowship with other believers. It is also a powerful spiritual growth enhancer to get involved in a youth ministry and attend Christian conferences and workshops. This can give teens a place to go where they can receive the positive support, encouragement, and prayers of their Christian teen peers. As we grow spiritually, God expects us to begin to use the special gifts that He has placed inside each one of us to serve others.

There are several levels of Christian spiritual development. Let’s look and see where you are in your Christian growth. The first step of spiritual growth and development is asking Jesus Christ to be your personal savior. When a person does that, whether they are young or old, they become a spiritual newborn baby. This is the foundation of every Christian believer. In 1 John 2:12, John says, “I

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Scripture SUPPORT

John 4:24

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

Job 32:8

But is the spirit in a person, the breath of Almighty, that gives them understanding.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here!

Luke 2:52

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

1 John 2:12

I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.” He addresses them this way because baby Christians believe in God but still don’t take it too seriously.

As baby Christians learn more about Jesus, their belief in God grows stronger, and they begin to be bothered by their conscience regarding right and wrong. As they continue to grow spiritually, they may begin to sporadically attend church and experience guilty feelings when they display inappropriate behavior. New Christians still may not know much about what having faith in God is all about. As they grow even more, they attend church regularly. And just like parents love their child and teach them about life and the world, it is the responsibility of the church family to love the new baby Christians and teach them about the promises of God and instructions in the Bible and the kingdom of God (Matthew 28:19-20).

Baby Christians begin to learn more about God and His commandments, but they are still quite immature. First John 2:3 tells us, “We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.” In the Bible, in 1 Peter 1:14, Peter says that these immature years of Christian spiritual growth can be challenging. He warns, “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” During these years, it is important to listen to your parents, pastors, and other church teachers and leaders who can help you keep you on the path that God has planned for you. Make it a habit to read your Bible, attend church, and continue to stay involved in church activities. It is also important to make good choices and to pick Christian friends who make good choices. First Corinthians 15:33 says, “Don’t be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”

As time passes and you continue learning about God and His Son Jesus and how to follow the instructions in the Bible, your spirit will become more developed and mature. Not only will you know the instructions and commands that the Bible

teaches, but you will also have a desire to live it. And as you live your life according to the Word of God, it will cause you to be blessed and prosper in all that you do. Joshua 1:8 says, “Keep the Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” It will be obvious that the Holy Spirit abides in you, and your spirit will be more and more closely aligned with the image of God, and you will fulfill the purpose for your life. Then you will be ready to give others the good news about Jesus Christ just as it was given to you.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how God created man and woman in His image.
- Lead children in a discussion about how God is a spirit being and because man and woman are created in God’s image, they are spirit beings too.
- Lead children in a discussion about what it means to accept Christ as your personal Savior.
- Lead children in a discussion about how to make our spirit grow and stay healthy as well as our physical body.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the ways we can develop our relationship with God and help our spirit grow?
- Lead children in a discussion about levels of Christian spiritual growth and development.



Scripture SUPPORT

1 John 2:3

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.

1 Peter 1:14

As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

Joshua 1:8

Keep the Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

My Spiritual Growth Plan Worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/JOrcqqpHCt8> (Briefly discuss)

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write on their “My Spiritual Growth Plan” worksheet something they will do each day of the week to help them grow spiritually. Have children share some of their plans.
- Assign children a Bible verse from the lesson Scripture supports.
- Have them memorize the verse to recite in your next class time.
- (Give a small reward for students who memorize the verse.)

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

My Spiritual Growth Plan Worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/JOrcqqpHCt8> (Briefly discuss)

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write on their “My Spiritual Growth Plan” worksheet something they will do each day of the week to help them grow spiritually. Have children share some of their plans.
- Assign the older children a Bible verse from the lesson Scripture supports.
- Have them memorize the verse to recite in your next class time.
- (Give a small reward for students who memorize the verse.)

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I TALK TO GOD EVERY DAY?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I am growing stronger
spiritually!*

MY SPIRITUAL GROWTH PLAN



Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

MONDAY _____

TUESDAY _____

WEDNESDAY _____

THURSDAY _____

FRIDAY _____

SATURDAY _____

SABBATH _____

Resources & Materials

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/637318/26587361/1444150967840/westerhoffstyles-of-faith.pdf?token=25eiXOkMimSThYQfnobBHQnFVKE%3D>

Object Lessons for Every Occasion by Sheryl Bruinsma, Baker Book House, 1991, p. 78-79

Unsharpened pencil, pencil sharpener

Coles, R. (1998). *The moral intelligence of children: How to raise a moral child*. New York: Plume Books.

Damon, W. (1999, August). *The moral development of children*. Scientific American, 281(2), 72-78.

Gospel Salvation

Dear Facilitator: In John 3:16, it says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

In this session we will unpack what that means for you, your family, and the world. Why did God have to send His Son? What does it mean that God loves you? What does it mean to perish? What is eternal life?

These are big topics that we will be discussing, but they are more important than anyone could imagine.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:


1. Write a personal faith story.
2. Use a tool to share the gospel with others.

This week’s commitment statement is: As God has blessed us, so we should bless others.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about the stages of spiritual development and how to grow spiritually—both individually and as a family.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** What is this (hold up a map)? Many of us use a GPS that contains a multitude of maps. What good is a map? A map provides direction from one place to another. It is important that one trusts the map to be accurate.

Perhaps you had an experience where a road has changed, and your map was not updated. Perhaps you were dependent on your GPS, only to have it take you to a field rather than the airport.

It is too bad that we are not given a map how to live our life. Well... that is not exactly true. We have God's Word, the Bible, that can be a map for us to follow. It tells us what is good and right (Ten Commandments) and tells us how we should interact with others (Sermon on the Mount). It also teaches us why there is sin in this world and the result of sin.

Today we are going to explain how Jesus paid the price for our sin and how we can inherit eternal life.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Write a personal faith story.
2. Use a tool to share the gospel with others.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: Share memories of a time when you did not know how to get to your destination.

1. What strategies did you use?
2. Were they successful?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our LORD.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

GOSPEL SALVATION

Sharing the story of salvation with one's children, family members, or others can seem daunting. Often, we do not know where to begin.

One cannot share what one does not already have. Therefore, it is important for us to spend time learning how to share our faith. If you have not had the opportunity to accept the gift of salvation, today can be the day! For others, it will be an excellent reminder of what God has done for us.

If facilities have a projector, computer, and Internet capabilities, go to <https://peacewithgod.net/> and use the four video clips from the Billy Graham Foundation.

If that is not a possibility, use its website information found below.

STEP 1

- God loves you and has a plan for you!
- The Bible says, "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, [Jesus Christ], that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

- Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" — a complete life full of purpose (John 10:10).

STEP 2

- Here's the problem: man is sinful and separated from God.
- We have all done, thought, or said bad things, which the Bible calls "sin." The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
- The result of sin is death, spiritual separation from God (Romans 6:23).
- The good news?

Put a break here between steps 2 and 3.

It should also be discussed that people look for several ways to get back in relationship with God. They try being good, giving money, going to church, helping others, etc. None of this works, but God has a solution.

STEP 3

- God sent His Son to die for your sins!
- Jesus died in our place so we could have a relationship with God and be with Him forever.
- “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).
- But it didn’t end with His death on the cross. He rose again and still lives!
- “Christ died for our sins. ... He was buried. ... He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6).

STEP 4

- Would you like to receive God’s forgiveness?
- We can’t earn salvation; we are saved by God’s grace when we have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. All you have to do is believe you are a sinner, that Christ died for your sins, and ask His forgiveness. Then turn from your sins—that’s called repentance. Jesus Christ knows you and loves you. What matters to Him is the attitude of your heart, your honesty. We suggest praying the prayer below to accept Christ as your Savior.

“Dear God,

I know I’m a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that you raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as LORD, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

If you have accepted Christ as your personal LORD and Savior, at some point someone will ask you your faith story. Next, we are going to spend a bit of time writing it out, using a handout from the Billy Graham Foundation. Some of you can pinpoint a time when you received Christ as your Savior; others

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might not remember the actual time but cannot ever remember not knowing Christ as a personal LORD and Savior.

Facilitator should share his or her faith story.

For part 1, if you remember when you accepted Christ as your LORD and Savior, complete the Faith Story as directed. For others, feel free to describe a time in your life when you felt empty and then discovered God working in your life.

Write your faith story using the handout:
<https://bgcdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/YourFaithStory2.pdf>

We spent time talking about writing your own personal faith story and learning a way to share your faith.

Why is it important to share your faith?

Identify one person to whom you can share what you learned.

Let's review the four steps.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Write a personal faith story.
2. Use a tool to share the gospel with others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Faith Formation

GOSPEL SALVATION

Objectives

- Help children be aware of why we need a Savior.
- Help children be aware of what we must do to be saved.
- Help children be aware of the importance of their salvation.
- Help children be aware of their parent's role in training them in the instructions of the Bible.
- Help children be aware that their parents are praying for them to accept Christ as their personal Savior.
- Help children be aware that they are becoming disciples for Christ.
- Help children be aware that God expects them to pray for the salvation of others.
- Help children be aware of how to witness to others.

Salvation means being saved from sin and its consequences. In the Bible, the book of Genesis tells us that after God created the earth, He created man, Adam, and woman, Eve. God created man and everything in the earth for His pleasure. God put man in charge of all that He created. Then God gave Adam and Eve a beautiful garden to live in filled with everything they could want or need. He commanded them to be fruitful, have many children, and repopulate the earth. God did this because He wanted to be in an intimate relationship with

Adam, Eve, and all the children that were born. He wanted to be a loving Father to all people as His children and have them love Him in return.

God gave Adam and Eve the rules of the garden and His expectations for them. Everything started out wonderful until Adam and Eve decided to ignore the rules. They allowed an evil serpent to talk them into disobeying God and broke the rules. That is what sin means—disobeying God and breaking the commandments that

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He has given us. When Adam and Eve sinned, they destroyed the close relationship that God wanted to have with them and all the children that would be born into the world. Their sin caused them to be separated from God and to be condemned to death (Genesis 2:17).

When sin entered the world, it brought sickness, disease, pain, sorrow, and death. All people on the earth came from the first parents, Adam and Eve, and as their children, we have inherited their sinful nature. And because of our sinful nature, we too are separated from God and condemned to die. The Bible tells us that we all have sinned. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Some of the sins people commit are anger, gossiping, stealing, meanness, selfishness, lying, and cheating. And there are so many more!

But because of God's great love for us, He planned a way for our sins to be taken away, so we can be close to Him again. He decided to send His precious Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to save us from our sins. However, first we must admit that we have sinned and need a Savior. Then we must ask Jesus to come into our life and be our personal Savior. We must believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God, believe He died on the cross to save us from our sins, and believe that He was buried and rose again with all power! When we do this, we know that we are saved and will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Did you know that the most important decision you will ever make in your life is asking Jesus to be your personal Savior? One of the most important prayers that Christian parents can pray is for their child to accept Christ. Your parents are seeking God's grace and wisdom as they raise you to become disciples of Christ. The Bible tells us that we are saved by God's grace and gift of faith in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:8). God graciously gives

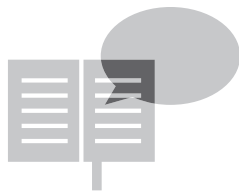
us the gift of faith that makes us believe in the good news about Jesus. So, your parents are praying for you to receive that gift of faith that causes you to believe in Jesus as your Savior. Your parents are also praying that the Holy Spirit would draw you to God from birth and set you on a path of learning about God, following Him, serving Him, and loving Him all the days of your life and throughout eternity.

As your first teachers and role models, God has placed your parents in your life as an example of what a personal relationship with Christ looks like—one of unconditional love. Parents teach you this by reading and modeling lessons from the Bible such as showing mercy, extending grace, granting forgiveness, spending time in prayer, attending church, and demonstrating unconditional love to you and each other. Parents demonstrate how God wants us to give when we observe our parents sharing what they have with others. Your parents sacrifice their wants and needs to make sure you have everything you need and even some of the things you want.

You are blessed that God gave you parents that not only know what the Bible says, but they also do their best to live according to God's Word in their everyday life. Observing your parents helps you see the importance of having the Word of God direct your path. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

As we learn more and more about Christ, we realize how fortunate we are to have been chosen by Him to be in His family and experience the many promises He has made to us in the Bible. He has made us many promises. He said He would be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9). He said He will keep you in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). He said He will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). He said all things will work together for your good (Romans 8:28). He said He will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19). He said He loves you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). And there are

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Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 2:17

...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Romans 10:9

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is LORD,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

so many more precious promises! What an honor it is to be called God’s child! But God wants everyone to be His child so that they can be blessed by His promises too. That is why He wants us to tell others about Him and His precious Son, Jesus.

Telling others about Jesus will also help your faith become strong. You may be young, but you are not too young to be a disciple of Jesus. Simply tell others the reasons you believe in Jesus—why you love Him and how having Him in your life makes you a better person. But even more important than telling others about Jesus, be sure you are living a life of peace, love, kindness, and service in front of them. The Bible says when you do that, others will see that there is something special about you and ask you about the God you believe in and serve. And when they do, that will give you an opportunity to tell them about God’s plan of salvation for ALL people. Matthew 5:16 says, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” So, make sure your light is shining brightly!

DISCUSS

- What does gospel salvation mean?
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s order and caused sin to enter the world.
- Why do people experience sickness, disease, pain, sorrow, and death?
- What did God do to pay for our sin so that we could be close to Him again?
- What is the most important decision you will make in your life?
- Why does God want His children to tell others about Him?
- When people see the Holy Spirit working in your life, what happens?



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Gospel Salvation Worksheet
Pencils, crayons, and/or markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/SeuosiXiUqw>

(Discuss briefly) If not possible to view video, have children do activity without video.

- Have children fill out “Gospel Salvation Story” worksheet.
- At the bottom of sheet, have children write in their words what the picture is about.
- Have children share what they wrote.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Gospel Salvation Worksheet
Pencils, crayons, and/or markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/SeuosiXiUqw>

(Discuss briefly) If not possible to view video, have children do activity without video.

- Have children fill out “Gospel Salvation Story” worksheet.
- At the bottom of sheet, have children write in their words what the picture is about.
- Have the older children as a group create a skit to present the Gospel Salvation Story to everyone.



Scripture SUPPORT

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Hebrews 13:5

God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

I LET MY LIGHT SHINE EVERYWHERE I GO.

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

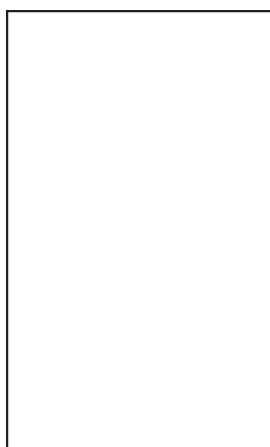
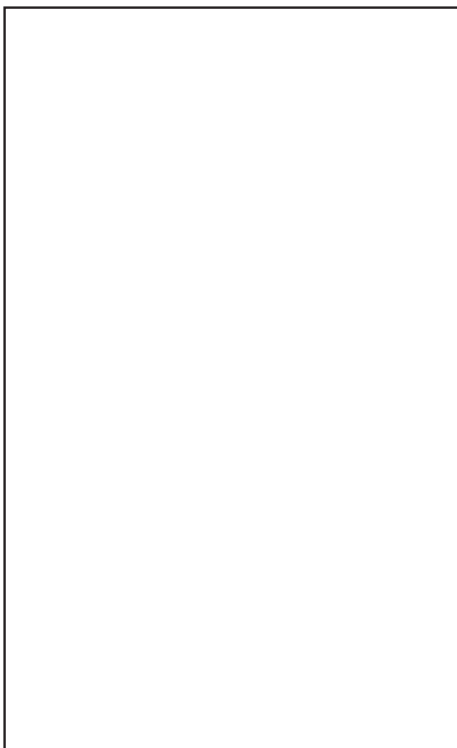
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

Jesus is my LORD and Savior!

GOSPEL SALVATION STORY WORKSHEET



Resources & Materials

<https://peacewithgod.net/> -- Billy Graham – videos on how to share your faith

“Steps to Peace with God” handout: <https://bgcdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Printer-FriendlyStepstoPeacewithGod2.pdf>

“Your Faith Story” handout <https://bgcdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/YourFaithStory2.pdf>

The Praying Parent

Dear Facilitator: In Matthew 19:13, it says, “Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.”

In that day, children did not take a very prominent place in the family. In fact, they had no rights. Children, along with women and slaves, were treated like possessions. But, in Matthew, we see that Jesus encouraged interaction with children. Jesus desired to pray for them. Jesus loved them.

This week we are going to focus on prayer, specifically how one can pray for children and other family members.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Using Scripture, participants will:

1. Develop a prayer for each of their children.
2. Develop a prayer for other family members.
3. Develop a prayer for the community.

This week’s commitment statement is: Prayer changes things.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings



Scripture SUPPORT

Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD.


Psalms 133:1

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!


1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.


Welcome 5 minutes


 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.


Last week we spent time learning about salvation. We wrote our personal faith story and learned how to share the gospel with others.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** Today we are going to spend time learning about the topic of prayer, specifically how to use the Bible while praying for your children, family, and community.

 **Do:** Before we begin, I am wondering if we could share some of our favorite Bible passages. (Make a list on the board.)

 **Say:** As mentioned before, we are going to talk about prayer, specifically how to use Scripture in praying for our children, family members, and community.

Using Scripture, today's objectives are to:

1. Develop a prayer for each of your children.
2. Develop a prayer for other family members.
3. Develop a prayer for the community.

Our commitment statement is: Prayer changes things.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Share: Talk about the Bible verses with your family.

1. Share a favorite Bible verse.
2. Explain why this is your favorite verse.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

Acts 16:31

They replied, “Believe in the LORD Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Joshua 24:15

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

THE PRAYING PARENT

Have you ever thought about starting something—a hobby, activity, or study but then thought it was too late?

Facilitator, share a story about something you regret not starting sooner.

DISCUSS

- What are some things you wish you would have started sooner than later?

Prayer might have made your list. Perhaps you wish that your prayer life was deeper and richer.

It is never too late to begin praying for our children, family, and community. One way to enhance our prayers is making use of Scripture.

Facilitator share an example on how prayer has impacted your life.

DISCUSS

- What are the benefits of prayer?
- How has prayer impacted you and why?

Mr. Stanley, a noted pastor and publisher of In Touch Ministries, gave a message on prayer. He stated 14 benefits of prayer (<https://www.intouch.org/read/blog/14-benefits-of-prayer>):

1. Provides timely direction.
2. Prevents wrong decisions.
3. Eliminates worry and anxiety.
4. Produces peacefulness.
5. Invites God into our activity.
6. Produces confidence.
7. Eliminates fretting.
8. Sharpens discernment.
9. Gives us energy.
10. Prevents distractions.
11. Reminds us to act now.
12. Protects us from discouragement.
13. Opens doors of opportunity.
14. Helps us discern between busyness and fruitfulness.

From this list, in which area do you need the greatest support/help?

Stormie Omartian was a worried mom. With all that was happening in the world, she ran herself ragged with worry, wondering how she could keep her eyes on her children every minute of every day.

Eventually, she cried out to God, asking Him for peace. The answer she received was prayer.

Stormie notes that prayer is more than giving a wish list to God: “Prayer is acknowledging and experiencing the presence of God and inviting His presence into our lives and circumstances. It’s seeking the presence of God and releasing the power of God which gives us the means to overcome any problem” (Omartian, 2015, p. 18).

When we combine Scripture with our prayers, we are repeating God’s Word to Him. By doing so we are drawn into better understanding and realizing the promises of the Bible.

We will pause now and provide an example on how Galatians 5:22-23 can be used to pray over a child.

READ: Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Now, let’s see how we can use the verse as a prayer. I will be using the name Margot.

EXAMPLE: The Holy Spirit produces fruit in Margot. Fill her with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When Margot is equipped with these, she will be filled with the Spirit!

Earlier we came up with a list of favorite verses. Perhaps you could use one of those to pray over your child. Choose a verse for your child. Write it out, using your child’s name.

Notes

DISCUSS

- Have participants share what they wrote for their child.

Choose a verse for another family member. Write it out using the person's name.

DISCUSS

- Who are members of the community that we should be praying for by name? (List them on a white board, if available.)

As a group, choose a verse for a member of the community. Write it out using the person's name.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Develop a prayer for each of your children.
2. Develop a prayer for other family members.
3. Develop a prayer for the community.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Faith Formation

THE PRAYING PARENT

Objectives

- Help children be aware that their parents pray for them.
- Help children be aware why parents pray for their children.
- Help children be aware that parents in the Bible prayed for their children.
- Help children be aware that, most importantly, parents pray for their salvation.
- Help children be aware that God wants them to pray.

The Bible says that children are a gift from God! That means that you are a gift that God has given to your parents! Psalm 127:3 says, “Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.” When you are given a gift, you take special care of it! That is what your parents are doing when they pray for you. They are taking special care of you—their very precious gift from God! Though being a parent is a challenging assignment, it is also one of the most rewarding and important responsibilities anyone can have. God said being a parent is an exceptional blessing!

When God created man (Adam) and woman (Eve), He did it because He wanted to be a parent Himself and have a family of His own. God commanded them to have

many children and fill the earth with people. God’s plan was for Adam and Eve to love, honor, and revere Him while teaching their children to do the same. Adam and Eve soon had two sons, Cain and Abel, and later other sons and daughters.

Like all good parents, Adam and Eve loved their children and did all they could to provide for them, protect them, and teach them right from wrong. However, after experiencing a painful tragedy between their two sons, they soon found out that they were going to need God’s help to raise their children (Genesis 4:8). They realized that there was no way that they could guard their children from all the danger, harm, and other problems they would be faced with every day.

There are several examples in the Bible of parents praying for their children. In Genesis 17:18, Abraham prayed for his son Ishmael. In 1 Chronicles 29:19, King David prayed for his son, Solomon, and in 1 Samuel 1:28, Hannah prayed for her son, Samuel. And Just like Adam and Eve and these other fathers and mothers in the Bible, Christian parents today need God's help to raise children who love, honor, and revere God. That is why one of the most important things a parent can do for their child is pray for them. Lamentations 2:19 tells parents, "Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the LORD. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children."

Parents are the most significant and influential people in a child's life. Christian parents pray regularly for their child's physical needs, but even more importantly, they pray for their spiritual needs. They pray for their child to accept Christ as their personal Savior because parents know that is the most important decision their child will make in their life. This is the main decision that will determine the outcome of their child's future.

Children today are constantly confronted with evil influences by many factors in their home and school community such as peer pressure, unwholesome music, video games, and other media. When parents pray, they solicit the powerful help of the Holy Spirit into their child's life because the Holy Spirit is the only one that can help their child overcome the pull of Satan and draw their child to Jesus. Ephesians 1:13 says, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit."

Prayer is the glue that keeps families strong. In addition to praying for their children, parents can model living according to the Word of God in front of them. Proverbs 22:6 tells parents, "Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." So, praying parents help children develop godly habits and behavior at an early age. They involve their children

in activities like reading the Bible, attending church and Sunday school, memorizing verses, and having family devotion and prayer time. Of all these godly habits, prayer is right at the top of the list.

Prayer is how we communicate with God. Parents know that when they engage their children in family prayer, it not only teaches them the importance of prayer, but it helps to build their child's relationship with the LORD.

Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." And 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to continually be prayerful. God loves it when we spend time with Him thanking Him for our many blessings and telling Him how much we love and value Him. He loves it when we ask for His help with our hurts, disappointments, and concerns. He also wants us to ask for His advice for making the right decisions and for his help in seeking guidance for health and healing for our bodies.

Christian parents also ask God to help them create the proper vision for your life. God created you for a very specific reason. There are important contributions you are supposed to make during your life on earth. God put special gifts and abilities inside of you to accomplish His purpose for creating you. As your parents raise you, they become aware of your gifts and abilities. They know your strengths and weaknesses, and they know your hopes and dreams. Your parents pray not just thinking of your own earthly goals and dreams, but for God's will and plans for your life to be accomplished. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Your parents know that if you fulfill the plan God has for you, your life will be filled with peace, love, prosperity, health, and success.

Not only can your parents pray for you, but you can pray for your parents. Being a parent is no easy task. Parents are often faced with trying circumstances and tough decisions. And though parents pray for

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Scripture SUPPORT

Psalm 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Genesis 4:8

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Genesis 17:18

And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

1 Chronicles 29:19

And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees...

1 Samuel 1:28

So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.

Lamentations 2:19

Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the LORD. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children.

themselves, it would bless them immensely to know that their children are praying for them too. You can start out by praising God for your parents! Thank Him for helping them provide for you and take care of you. Ask God to protect them and give them good health. Pray for your parents to be contented and have a happy marriage. Pray that your parents have wisdom and are successful in becoming all that God created them to be. And pray for your family to have love, peace, unity, and joy because those things will not only bless your parents but will also bless you and your entire family.

Sincere prayer is effective and helps parents focus on what is most important for their child to live a godly successful life. James 5:16 says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." God trusts your parents and placed you in just the right family to give you all the love and experiences you will need to prepare you for your assignment on earth. He gave you parents who would make sure you love Him and know how to communicate with Him. Thank God that you have praying parents! Remember:

Prayer delights God's ear; it melts His heart; and opens His hand. God cannot deny a praying soul. (Thomas Watson)

DISCUSS

- The Bible says children are given to their parents as a gift.
- How do you treat a gift?
- What is prayer?
- What is the most important decision you will make in your life? Why is it the most important?
- Why do parents need to pray for their children?
- What is the most important thing parents pray for their children?
- What kinds of things can children pray for their parents?



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

“My Prayer for My Parents” worksheet
Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/msjMEsJNJpY> (Discuss briefly.)
(If not possible to view video, do activity without it.)

- After the lesson and video discussion, explain to children that just as the father in the video was praying and asking God for specific things for his son, children can pray and ask God for specific things for their parents as well.
- On “My Prayer for My Parents” worksheet, have children write specific things they want to pray and ask God for their parents. Challenge them to pray these things for their parents daily.
- Have children share some of the things they are praying for their parents.
- Smaller children can color a picture to make their parents happy.



Scripture SUPPORT

Ephesians 1:13

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray continually.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

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AGES 12-16

Materials

"My Prayer for My Parents" worksheet

Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/msjMEsJNJpY> (Discuss briefly.)

(If not possible to view video, do activity without it.)

- After the lesson and video discussion, explain to children that just as the father in the video was praying and asking God for specific things for his son, children can pray and ask God for specific things for their parents as well.
- On "My Prayer for My Parents" worksheet, have children write specific things they want to pray and ask God for their parents. Challenge them to pray these things for their parents daily.
- Have children share some of the things they are praying for their parents.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I PRAY FOR MY PARENTS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*My parents are
praying for me!*

MY PRAYER FOR MY PARENTS

Dear LORD,

These are the things I am praying
for my parents: _____

[illegible]

Thank you, LORD!

SIGNED:

Resources & Materials

Books from <https://www.stormieomartian.com/store1-2/>

Omartian, S. (2014). *The Power of a Praying Parent*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0736957670

Blessings Given

Dear Facilitator: Blessing. It is a word that we use in our Christian circles, but what does it mean? The Old Testament is filled with people blessing people: Elijah to Elisha, Isaac to Jacob and Esau, Moses to Joshua, and more. Are blessings still relevant today? Should we pass on blessings to others? If yes, how does one go about blessing another?

Ultimately, blessings come from God. In Ephesians 1:3, it says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”

This week we are going to begin to understand the term “blessing.”

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:


1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week’s commitment statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about the power of prayer and how we can pray for our children and family members.


 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Did you know studies have shown that if you think positively about another, the other will more likely than not behave positively? In school, if a teacher thinks that a student has higher potential, the student will do better in school. The opposite is also true: If you think someone is no good, often the person will live up to your expectations. This is called a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Often, in the Bible, fathers would give blessings to their children. Because we can look at those blessings, written in the Bible, we also know what happened in the person's life. The blessings often were prophetic. "A spoken blessing is a positive, biblical statement that invokes the blessing of God in the life of another" (<http://iblp.org/>).

We read stories of Isaac blessing Jacob, Moses blessing Joshua, Noah blessing his sons, Joseph blessing the people of Israel, and more!


 **Share:** Share a blessing you, the facilitator, wrote for a family member or friend.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week's commitment statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Share something you appreciate about one another.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

Matthew 19:13

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

Mark 10:16

And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Genesis 27

Blessing from Isaac to Jacob and Esau

Genesis 49

Jacob's blessing to his sons

Deuteronomy 33

Moses's blessing to the people of Israel

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

BLESSINGS GIVEN

Have each member share what he or she learned about each other over the family dinner conversation. (If available, write on a board comments from participants.)

Sometimes we do not realize how much we appreciate each other until we talk about it. Maybe you discovered something that someone appreciates about you and would have never known unless you talked about it today.

Blessing. It is a word that we use in our Christian circles, but what does it mean? The Old Testament is filled with people blessing people: Elijah to Elisha, Isaac to Jacob and Esau, Moses to Joshua, and more.

Are blessings still relevant today? Should we pass on blessings to others? If yes, how does one go about blessing another?

Ultimately, blessings come from God. In Ephesians 1:3, it says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

This week we are going to begin to understand the term, "blessing."

In Genesis 27, we see that Jacob tricked Isaac into giving him his brother Esau's blessing. In verse 38, Esau cries out to his father, requesting that he too be blessed. (If the passage is unfamiliar, read it together.)

How about you? Did you yearn for some kind word or blessing from your mom or dad? What about your children?

According to Trent (TheBlessing.com), a blessing can fight back against a toxic culture, open a child's heart to a lasting faith, and help heal hurts from the past.

Many times, you can take Bible verses and create a blessing for your child(ren).

STEPS TO WRITING YOUR BLESSING (Theblessings.com)

1. Paragraph 1: Why your child is special
 - Write one to two things you appreciate about your child.
 - Explain why you love this about your child, especially how it blesses you and other's lives.
2. Paragraph 2: Face their fears
 - Pick a challenge your child faces.
 - Acknowledge the fear.
 - Provide encouragement and hope.
3. Paragraph 3: Share your genuine commitment
 - Share how you and the LORD are committed to the child no matter what.
4. Share the experience in a unique way.
5. Memorialize the moment by taking a picture or something similar.

Example from Theblessings.com

"Jared, we are so grateful that the LORD has given you to us. Two things we love about you so much is how the LORD has built into your life such a joyful spirit, and He's combined that with an amazing energy for jumping right into the middle of life!"

"Jared, we know as you start fifth grade at a new school that there will be lots of challenges. But your joy for life, your incredible smile, and your willingness to jump in and try new things are strengths God will use in your life to help this be a great year for you—and to help others. We believe the LORD will get you through the tough days and help you find that right group of friends. We know it may be tough at first, but we pray that by the end of the year, this will have been the best year ever for you in your new school."

"So, Jared, may you know every day that Mom and I are going to be praying for you and will be looking for ways to cheer you on. And even on those days when it may be tough to smile or when you're lonely and miss your old friends or times are just tough,

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may you remember that you're NEVER alone. God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). We want you to know that God will be with you every day in your new school. He'll be your Shepherd and guide you every day, and as long as we have life and breath, we'll be there for you as well. We can't wait to watch you use the strengths God has given you to create a special future!"

Bible verses

Now it is time to write blessings for members of your family. What are some good Bible verses to use as you prepare blessings for your family members (<http://iblp.org/>)?

- Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in his life? (See Galatians 5:22-25.)
- Is he serving others in love? (See Galatians 5:13 and Luke 6:27-38.)
- Is he seeking God's guidance so that he can carry out the good works God has prepared for him to do? (See James 3:12-13, I Timothy 6:11-19, Titus 3:8, and Hebrews 10:24.)
- Is he submitting to his God-ordained authorities? (See Hebrews 13:17, James 4:7, Colossians 3:18, and I Peter 2:13-14.)
- Does it appear that something may be competing with his devotion to God? (See Matthew 6:33.)
- Are there particular temptations that seem to present big challenges in his life? (See Matthew 6:13, I Corinthians 10:13, Matthew 26:41, I Timothy 6:9-12, and Luke 8:4-18.)
- Are you aware of any fears, hurts, or pressures that he is facing? (See Galatians 6:1-3, James 5:16, Romans 12:1-15, and Ephesians 4:32.)

If comfortable, have each family share the blessing.

Write down each family member's name. Next to the name, write how you appreciate the child, a fear the child faces, and some potential Bible verses to use for your blessing.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week's statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

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Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Faith Formation

BLESSINGS GIVEN

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what is meant by the term “blessing.”
- Help children be aware of what is meant by unconditional love.
- Help children be aware of the power of unconditional love.
- Help children be aware of how we can learn to love unconditionally.
- Help children be aware of how to bless their parents.

What is a blessing? A blessing is God’s favor and protection. A blessing can also be a prayer or word of favor and protection spoken over someone. It is a powerful gift that secures God’s plan for a person’s life. Ultimately, blessings come from God, and God gives us many blessings! For example, the gift of unconditional love that a parent bestows on their child is a blessing. Some would argue that it should be easy for a parent to show unconditional love to their child, but most parents will tell you that they learned that they need God’s help to love each other as well as their children unconditionally. God and your parents love you unconditionally. When we love

someone without condition, it means we love them just the way they are no matter what they say, do, act. That may seem as if it should not be that difficult, but in many cases, it can be quite challenging.

When parents love each other and their children unconditionally, their actions are saying, “I love you. You are good enough just the way you are. I love you while you are growing and developing into the person God created you to be. You have my love—no matter what!”

Everyone needs to know there is someone loving them, cheering for them, praying for them, and committing to being there as long as they live. God loved us unconditionally

when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to save us from our sins. Romans 5:8 proves this: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

When children feel loved and affirmed just the way they are, even with their imperfections, they feel good about themselves. They are more willing to look at their shortcomings and work on changing their not-so-positive behaviors. Just think how much better the world would be if every child experienced this kind of love and affirmation.

Even when your parents must correct you, they are doing that because they love you. Correction is also a part of loving you. Proverbs 3:12 says, “... the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father [disciplines] the son he delights in.” As our loving Father, God corrects us when we exhibit incorrect behavior because He loves us. So, when your parents correct and discipline you, they are proving their love for you.

One way we can learn to love others just as they are is to realize that just as each of us has strengths in our character, we also have weak areas in our character where we can improve and do better. And God loves us even when we are not so loveable. Yes, God just loves us! He can’t help Himself because God is Love (1 John 4:8). We don’t have to earn it or act a certain way. In the Bible, God lets us know He is actively committed to us. In Hebrews 13:5, He tells us that no matter what, He will never leave us or forsake us. Also, Jeremiah 31:3 says, “The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.’”

God wants us to love each other the way that He loves us. Every time we read verses where God tells us He loves us, it’s as if He is right here saying it to us repeatedly. If we are to follow God’s example, we need to say to each other often, “I love you!” We need to always be there for each other in good times and even more so in bad times. When

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we must confront someone, we do it in calmness and confirm our love with peaceable words and gestures. A warm hug and a forgiving smile can go a long way to erase bitterness.

Through the blessing of unconditional love, we learn what it is to experience feeling valued and loved by the important people in our lives. In the Bible, along with daily speaking affirmation over their children and demonstrating their active commitment through their everyday support and provision, parents also administered blessing in other ways. A very powerful way was through their words. A spoken blessing is a positive statement that asks for the favor of God to be in the life of another person.

God's Word tells us that there is incredible power in our words (Proverbs 18:21). The first spoken blessings in the Bible are in Genesis 1:28 when God blessed Adam and Eve. Then, in Genesis 12:1-3 and again in Genesis 22:17, God blesses Abraham. Afterward, many other persons in the Bible bestowed blessings. Later in the book of Genesis, Abraham spoke the blessing over his son, Isaac; Isaac over his son, Jacob; and Jacob also blessed his children. In Luke 24:50, Jesus lifted His hands and blessed His disciples. The meaning of the word "bless" is to speak well of, to praise, or to speak God's favor and prosperity. Ultimately, the blessing is God giving power to someone to do that which they were created to do. Like our examples from the Bible, when we use our words to speak a blessing over someone, it encourages, strengthens and lifts the one who it is spoken to.

Blessings are still powerful today! A parent may place their hands on their child's head and pray over them speaking words of love and affirmation. Another way to bless someone is by describing to them an extraordinary future that God has planned for them and declaring it to come to fruition. The blessing lets the child know what their parent thinks of them. It also helps them to see their future through God's eyes. A spoken blessing is a way to

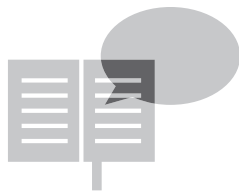
show God's love, and when a parent blesses their child, it invokes the presence of God in their life and sets the child on a life path that is pleasing to God. In Mark 10:16, some people brought their children to Jesus so He could touch them, and it says that Jesus took the children in His arms and put His hands on them and blessed them. Jesus set an example for us to follow. He wants us to know that blessing children is just as important and meaningful in our world today as when He walked on the earth.

Yes, it is powerful for parents to bless their children, but did you know that you can bless your parents? In Ephesians 6:1-2, the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." So, as you can see, God even makes a special promise to you when you honor your parents!

When you honor your parents, you are placing high value on them, and this blesses them. You do this by the attitude you display to them, how you speak to them, and how you obey them... no whining or complaining! You can bless your parents by giving them affectionate hugs and kisses and by making sure you tell them often how much you appreciate them for everything they do for you. You can bless them by spending time talking to them, giving them a public verbal tribute, writing them a heartfelt note, drawing them a beautiful picture, or making a special card to express your love for them. When you do this, you will not only bless your parents, but you will bring a smile to God's face and abundant blessings on your own life for years to come.

DISCUSS

- What is unconditional love?
- How does God love us unconditionally?
- What does God say about disciplining us, His children?
- What does God tell parents about disciplining their children?



Scripture SUPPORT

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Proverbs 3:12

...the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father [disciplines] the son he delights in.

1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Hebrews 13:5

...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

Proverbs 18:21

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

- Why is it good for a parent to bless their child?
- What are some ways a child can bless their parents?
- What is the most important way a child can bless their parent?



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on young children, and the second is for children ages 4-16.

YOUNG CHILDREN

Materials

Pencils, crayons, or markers

- Color a picture of children playing with Jesus.

AGES 4-16

Materials

Small package of sticky notes for each child

Envelopes

Pencils and markers

Before showing the video, tell children that the video expresses God's unconditional love for us and what the Bible says He thinks and says about us. Tell the children you would like for them to listen carefully to what God thinks and says about them.

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Lm5XNDt02aQ> (Briefly discuss)
(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- After the lesson and viewing the video, explain to children that the video was expressing God's unconditional love for each one of us. Ask them how it makes them feel to hear Him say wonderful loving things about them?

- Give each child a packet of at least 20 sticky notes. Tell them they are going to write blessings on sticky notes. Have them write loving comments to their parents, brothers, sisters, and other loved ones telling them how special they are to them or telling them what they love about them.
- When children are finished, have them put their sticky notes together back in their “Blessing Envelope.”
- Tell them to stick them in places where they know their mom, dad, or other loved ones will find them. (Places like the bathroom mirror, car steering wheel, brother or sister’s bedroom mirror, or backpack!)
- Have children share some of the blessings they wrote.



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 12:2

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

Genesis 22:17

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies.

Luke 24:50

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he [Jesus] lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Mark 10:16

And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Ephesians 6:1-2

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

I SPEAK WORDS OF APPRECIATION TO MY PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS OFTEN.

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*The blessing of God
is on my life!*

Resources & Materials

Trent, J., & Smalley, G. (2011). *The Blessing: Giving the Gift of Unconditional Love and Acceptance* (Revised), Nashville: Thomas Nelson. ISBN-13: 978-0849946370

TheBlessing.com <http://www.theblessing.com/html/parents-step-1.html>

Growing Spiritually as a Family

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on growing spiritually as a family.

Growing spiritually starts with developing our own relationship with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and going to church to connect with others who want to do the same. Out of our own growth will flow the ability to have a home of faith where we talk with our families about God, bring Him into everyday situations, and follow His direction.

Finally, it is important to remember that we were not meant to grow spiritually all by ourselves. The Bible is clear that the church or family of God is where we grow together, encourage one another, and worship God together.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth.
2. Commit to family devotions.
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's takeaway commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time talking about organizing our family for success by maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Tonight, we are going to talk about growing spiritually as a family and how our personal spiritual choices and spirituality as a family can strengthen our families. Even if we have never given much thought to our spiritual life before, we can take simple steps that will help us make our families stronger.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth
2. Commit to family devotions
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table:

1. What are some things that you do as an individual that reflect your spiritual beliefs?
2. What are some things that you do as a family that reflect your spiritual beliefs?
3. If someone came over for dinner at your house, would they be able to tell what you believe spiritually as a family? Why?

Our family commitment statement is: I commit to personal spiritual growth, family devotions, and being in fellowship with others to help my family grow spiritually.

These are the three key ways to grow spiritually. Growing spiritually starts with developing our own relationship with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and going to church to connect with others who want to do the same.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

**GROWING SPIRITUALLY
AS A FAMILY**

Today we will look at the process of growing spiritually together as a family. It has been said that a family that prays together stays together. While this may not always be true, what is true is that when we access God's power through prayer, changes take place in us and in our families.

Growing spiritually starts with God restoring our broken relationship with Him through our repentance and acceptance of Him. As we walk with God, spend time in His Word, and depend on His power, our lives and actions begin to be more like Him every day.

Families with a strong sense of spirituality tend to celebrate life as a gift and develop the following characteristics in their families:

- The power to love.
- A spirit of gratitude and hope.
- A sense of purpose and support.
- The power to forgive and be forgiven.

As parents, it's important to develop our own relationship with God so we can share our faith with our children and families. It's out of our own relationship with God that

we can begin to develop a home of faith to help our families grow and learn.

In our homes, God should be elevated to a place of importance. We do this in many practical ways, including activities that honor God and others or choices that put God first in our lives. Sometimes this looks like sitting down and reading the Bible in family devotions, and other times it looks like praying at mealtimes or bedtime. We can share Bible verses and stories or put them on the wall, mirror, or refrigerator. It could also include playing Christian music or talking about God when you're driving the car or sitting in your house.

It's important to take every opportunity to practice modeling our faith to our children. Just as a runner in a relay hands off a baton, you can successfully pass on your faith to your children. They should see you reading

God's Word and praying, hear you sharing what you are learning, and see you spending time with other believers and praying with and for them. You never stop being a parent, and the impression you make continues for generations. It's important to continually repeat the basic truths of God to our children.

We must be intentional to bring God into our conversations and situations in our families. Talking about God by asking questions influences the thoughts and actions of our children. For example, when your children have opportunities to make choices, you might ask them how they think God would want them to respond. You can easily bring God into many every day conversations by talking about Him and how He wants us to respond. In fact, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells us, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." What exactly is this faith talk? It's repeating the Law or the Word of God to our children.

DISCUSS

- Why is it important to develop your own relationship with God?
- What are some ways that you are developing your relationship with God?
- What are some practical ways that you could help your children grow spiritually at different age levels? (Discuss the handout sheet and add ideas.)
- What will be the results of discussing faith and spirituality with your children?

All of this sounds like quite a bit of work, but like we discussed before, God never meant for us to be alone in this process of helping our families grow spiritually. He gave us the church, which is filled with people in different stages of spiritual growth to help us along the way. To grow we must stay connected to other believers and rely on them as well as God as a source of support when we don't know what to do.



Scripture SUPPORT

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Notes

That's why going to church is so important. We get our strength and support from others in the family of God.

We also learn that no one is perfect, and it takes time to become spiritually strong. Just look in the Bible and you will see all kinds of examples of people who failed and yet still grew into people who God used to do His work. What's important is that we start growing and keep growing our whole lives. To help us all begin to think about how we can bring God into our everyday life, we are going to practice some "Faith Conversation Starters."

ACTIVITY

Handout

1. Ask parents to get into groups of two or three.
2. Have each person take a turn starting a conversation with the other parents.
3. Discuss in small groups how they might do this in their everyday life.
4. Ask for groups to share their thoughts and ideas. Be ready as the leader to share how you bring God into everyday conversation.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material today during our time together. Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to personal spiritual growth.
2. Commit to family devotions.
3. Commit to being in fellowship with others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as you parent this week?

40 minutes	
Student Training	
<i>Faith Formation</i>	GROWING SPIRITUALLY AS A FAMILY

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of why they were created.
- Help children to be aware of why families were created.
- Help children to be aware of how a family continues to grow spiritually.
- Help children to be aware that their parents are responsible for teaching them about God and what the Bible says.
- Help children to be aware that they are responsible for learning all that their parents teach them about God and what the Bible says.
- Help children to be aware that God wants them and their families to be lights that shine bright for Him.

In earlier lessons we talked about the reason that you were created. When God created you, He placed a very special gift inside of you. The gift that He has given to you is very important and will make the world a better place. We talked about the reason God created families. We learned that God created a special family just for you. He made sure you would have people in your life that would protect you, care for you, and provide for you. But the most important reason God created families was so that parents would have children, share

their faith in God with them, and raise them up to love Him.

God has given parents the responsibility to lead their children to God and teach them how to have a personal relationship with Him (Proverbs 22:6). Yes, He wants to have a relationship with you! God placed you in a Christian family where you would hear about Him, learn about Jesus, and see your parents living their lives according to what the Bible says. God wants you to learn to behave and live as the lessons in the Bible teach you as well.

For most of us, the place where we first learn about God is at home. For parents to teach you about God, they must have a relationship with Him first. They must pray, read the Bible, live their lives according to what the Bible tells them to do, go to church to worship God, and spend time with other believers. As parents grow in their relationship with God and gain more knowledge and wisdom about Him, it helps them to create a strong home of faith. Faith in God and in His Son, Jesus strengthens families. Faith in God brings families closer together and gives meaning to our lives. When parents are growing spiritually, they can then instruct their children about what the Bible says. They invite God to be the center of the family, and they bring God into everyday family celebrations and challenges. This gives them confidence to meet any circumstance the family may have (Isaiah 40:31).

When a family is growing spiritually, God is elevated to a place of importance. Some of the ways we can do this is by reading the Bible together, saying a blessing when we eat, or praying at bedtime. We can read Bible stories or listen to Christian music in our homes or when riding in our car. We can talk about God and share Bible verses or put them on the wall or refrigerator.

In the Bible, God tells parents, “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Here God is telling your parents how important it is to teach you about His Word. It is your responsibility to listen to your parents and do your best to learn all that they are teaching you.

We must remember that no family is perfect and growing in our faith in God takes time. But when a family prays and asks God to work in their lives, He will get involved, and your family will grow stronger and stronger in their faith. When that happens, you will see evidence that God is a part of your

family, and your family will enjoy more love, peace, joy, kindness, goodness, patience, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). That is what God wants for all families. As your family grows spiritually, it becomes a bright light shining in the world for God.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the most important reason God created family.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God placed them in a Christian family.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways parents teach their children about God.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways families can place God in the highest point of importance.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the evidence of God's involvement in the spiritual growth of families.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Pencils

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/HOHL9CPeGCM>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write three things they want God to do for their family. Now have children take those three things and use them to create a prayer for their family. Have students share if they want to.

Notes

Notes

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencils

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/QVHUx_EJnUs

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Have children write three things they want God to do for their family.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- Now have children take those three things and use them to create a prayer for their family. Have students share if they want to.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I WILLING TO PRAY TO GOD
EACH DAY OF THIS WEEK?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*My family is a light
shining in the world for God!*

Conflict

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on conflict. Conflict is inevitable. How do you handle conflict when it comes? Today we will spend some time looking at the conflict between Abram and Lot in Genesis 13.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Identify conflict.
2. Develop strategies to handle conflict.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Conflict is not a sin; how we handle conflict can be a sin.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting


Object Lesson:

Watch this video prior to the session and prepare to reenact it for the lesson: Nothing Is Impossible
<https://youtu.be/JFyzbMFVf2g>.


Materials needed for the introductory object lesson:

- 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper
- Scissors

Welcome *5 minutes*


 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.


Last week we spent time talking about growing spiritually as a family.


 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** I have an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.


 **Ask:** Do you think that I can walk through the paper?


 **Say:** It seems impossible, but is it?

 **Do:** Nothing Is Impossible Object Lesson—Stepping Through Paper: <https://youtu.be/JFyzbMFVf2g>.


 **Say:** Sometimes we have fights or disagreements with others, and it feels like we will never be able to fix the situation. It can feel impossible.


However, with the right tools, we can learn how to get through the conflict.

 **Say:** Sometimes we might find that conflict is a serious disagreement or argument between people. Conflict happens all the time with different people. Conflict is inevitable. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” It is because of sin that we have conflict; however, as our commitment statement points out, conflict is not a sin—how we handle conflict can be a sin.

 **Say:** Let’s look at an example from Genesis 13.

Read: Genesis 13. (Prior to reading, give a bit of the background of the story, explaining who Abram and Lot are and how they ended up in the predicament.)

 **Ask:** How did Abram handle the conflict? How did Lot? What was the better way to handle it?

 **Say:** The Bible says, in Proverbs 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” And Proverbs 13:10 says, “Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”

So, what will we be trying to accomplish through this session?

Today’s teaching objectives are to:


1. Identify conflict.
2. Develop strategies to handle conflict.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: Conflict is not a sin; how we handle conflict can be a sin.

Notes

Notes

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Identify a time when you had conflict.

1. How did you handle it?
2. Did the conflict go away after you handled it?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging the World

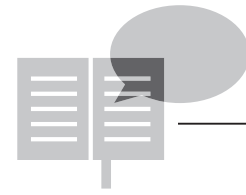
CONFLICT

There is conflict in all relationships. The balance between positive and negative interactions is more important than the number of negative interactions/conflicts.

Couples tend to argue in one of four ways. Three of these ways are okay and one is not. First, some couples are volatile, meaning that they have frequent and passionate arguments, but tend get over arguments quickly and maintain fondness for one another even while they argue. Second, some couples are validating, meaning that they argue politely, considering the other person’s point of view while validating the other person’s feelings. Third, some couples are avoidant, meaning that the don’t argue very often, tend to agree to disagree, and each person tries to resolve many problems on their own. The fourth way of handling conflict is not okay. Couples that are hostile argue with defensiveness, contempt, and withdrawal. Instead of responding constructively to one another, they tend to complain and accuse.

This cycle of negativity can grow and increase in severity. This way of fighting, called negative affect reciprocity, is the single feature that best distinguishes distressed from nondistressed couples. Therefore, one key to helping couples survive and thrive is to teach them how to avoid this negative, retaliatory cycle. People more often take offense than they mean to offend. If both people are asked to keep track of the number of times (a) they hurt, angered, or upset their partner and (b) their partner hurt, angered, or upset them, there’s a good chance that both people would have more offenses recorded in group b than in group a.

In other words, people more often feel hurt by their spouse or partner than they think they have hurt their spouse or partner.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 15:1

*A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

(Full Chapter)

Proverbs 13:10

*Where there is strife, there is pride,
but wisdom is found in those who take
advice.*

Genesis 13

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

¹³ So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ² Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

³ From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴ and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

⁵ Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷ And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. ⁹ Is not the whole

land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

¹⁰ Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³ Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring[a] forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Our threshold for what counts as an offense seems to differ depending on whether we were the offender or the person being offended. This difference can lead to problems. The person who feels hurt may be wanting or expecting remorse, an apology, or for that person to make amends, but the other person may not even be aware that their spouse feels hurt. Without awareness, the offender won't apologize, show remorse, or make amends. Therefore, it is important to help people become more aware of the times that they may have hurt their partner without knowing it. This can be done by regularly checking in with one's partner to ask if anything is bothering them. Saying sorry does not equal making amends.

Saying "Sorry" is Not Enough

*(Adapted from work by Laura Luchies,
PhD September 25, 2015)*

We have all heard that actions speak louder than words, and this adage is especially true when we have hurt others. Offenders might simply say, "I'm sorry" and expect to be let off the hook for their hurtful actions. They could also do the opposite by going the extra mile to make amends by accepting responsibility for their actions, expressing regret, and trying to compensate for what they did. A victim is inclined to forgive and remain in a relationship with their offender if a continued relationship is likely to be safe and valuable for the victim. By themselves, apologies may not go very far. Sincere apologies should be accompanied by amend-making behaviors that indicate responsibility and regret for one's misdeed and reparation to make up for the hurt and harm it caused.

Sincere amends promotes forgiveness, which, in turn, promotes stronger amends in a mutually reinforcing cycle. Amends promotes forgiveness because receiving amends makes victims feel like the perpetrator understands and validates their experience of the offense. A verbal apology is likely to be met with a verbal offer of forgiveness. Behavior that expresses amends is likely to be met with behavior that expresses

Notes

forgiveness. Forgiveness involves letting go of negative emotions and behaviors toward one's perpetrator. Forgiving is beneficial for the victim, even in the absence of amends.

Reconciliation involves returning the relationship between the victim and perpetrator to its pre-offense state. Reconciliation is beneficial for the victim only when the perpetrator has made amends. Otherwise, reconciliation can return the victim to harm's way. Forgiveness does not equal reconciliation. Both forgiveness and amends can take time.

Forgiving in the absence of amends (or other indication that the offender is unlikely to commit the offense again) can make a person feel like a human doormat. Forgiving a partner who HAS made amends tends to increase one's self-respect. Forgiving a partner who HAS NOT made amends tends to decrease one's self-respect, making one feel like a human doormat. First, they were "walked on" by the original offense. Now, they didn't stand up for themselves and put themselves in the position of possibly being hurt again by letting the offender off the hook.

If you are expected to forgive with no strings attached, you're more likely to be transgressed against. In one study, both members of couples predicted how much they would forgive their spouse if their spouse were to commit each of 20 specific transgressions in the next few months (e.g., lie, disrespect, forgot something important, infidelity). Those who predicted that they would be most forgiving were most likely to have a partner commit those transgressions in the next five months. Sadly, it seems like expecting to be forgiven makes us more likely to hurt by others.

Romans 6:1-2 seems relevant: "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!" We all hurt other people and probably do so more often than we realize. We should make every attempt to become aware of the times we hurt others, stop doing those things, and do

something real to restore the damage we've caused. If we do this, those we have hurt can forgive us without the fear of being victimized again and without feeling like a doormat. Although forgiveness is important, recognizing and making up for the times we hurt others is just as important.

We covered a lot of material during our time together. Our objectives were to:

1. Identify conflict.
2. Develop strategies to handle conflict.

This week's commitment statement is: Conflict is not a sin; how we handle conflict can be a sin.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging the World

CONFLICT

Objectives

- Help children identify conflict.
- Help children be aware of what causes conflict.
- Help children be aware of consequences for not resolving conflict.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible teaches us about conflict.
- Help children be aware of strategies to handle conflict.

Ever since the beginning of time, people have had to deal with conflict. Conflict is a serious disagreement or argument between people. It happens when a person wants their way or feels that they are being disrespected or treated unfair.

The earliest recorded example of conflict was in Genesis 4:1-12, when Adam and Eve's sons experienced a conflict. The older brother, Cain, was a farmer, and the youngest, Abel, was a shepherd. At the appropriate time, both young men came to present their offering to the LORD. Cain brought a sacrifice from his harvest of crops, and Abel brought a sacrifice from

his herd of sheep. When God received the offerings from the two brothers, He told Abel He was pleased with his gift, but God told Cain He was not pleased with his gift. This caused Cain to be angry and extremely jealous. The Bible does not say why God was not pleased, but this infuriated Cain. Afterward, in a fit of jealous rage, Cain killed his brother, Abel.

We see from the Bible that without some kind of resolution, a conflict can result in negative consequences like anger, blame, resentment, anxiety, grudges, ongoing tension, or violence. Some disagreements are more difficult to resolve than others,

but if people are not willing to work to find a solution to a conflict, it can fester and destroy relationships between friends and family members.

The fact of the matter is that every family will experience conflict between its members from time to time. Conflict is natural, and especially with children, it is an everyday occurrence. Dealing with conflict is how children learn to set boundaries and control their emotions. Family conflict happens since we are emotionally connected with our family members. Because these are the people that are closest to us, conflict with family members can hurt us the most. We love our family members, but that doesn't mean we always like them or get along with them.

God created families so that we would have a place where we would be loved, supported, encouraged, and cared for while we are growing and developing into the man or woman God created us to be. Family is also the place where you learn about and practice important life lessons you will have to master if you are going to have a productive and prosperous future. Resolving conflicts is one of those life lessons.

When families get along, it provides peace, belonging, comfort, security, and togetherness. Colossians 3:14 says, "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." It saddens God when families are filled with conflict and strife. A Christian family is supposed to be unified and working together as a team for God. It is impossible for a family to set a godly example and be a light in the community when they are plagued by unresolved conflict. Not only that, but conflict comes from the evil one. Satan knows that if he can keep a family in constant bickering and disagreement, then he can limit a family's accomplishments and ruin their influence. It pleases God when we live in harmony with one another. First Corinthians 1:10 instructs us, "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thoughts."

Notes

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When you are a member of a family, you are required to strive to love one another unconditionally. In 1 Corinthians, it describes the kind of love God wants us to have for one another. First Corinthians 13:4-7 says, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." When family members learn to love each other in this way, it creates an environment where it is safe to learn to work out any disagreements that may come between them. Colossians 3:13 tells us, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the LORD forgave you." So, once we work through a conflict, the Bible says we need to forgive and move on.

Although teachers help children learn to solve disagreements when they happen at school, parents are the main authority in your life, and family is the main place where instances of conflict happen. It is good for children to be allowed to solve their own problems when they can, but in the home, parents are the lead mediators for resolving conflicts among family members. It is up to them to make sure you are taught many life lessons. Learning to resolve conflicts is one of these important life lessons.

The key to handling conflict is to learn to identify your emotions and to control how you express your emotions. You must also learn to pay attention to the other person's emotions and realize that just as you have feelings and needs, so do others. Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." It is okay to have feelings, but you must control your actions. It is also important to remember that yelling and name-calling never helps to settle a disagreement. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." But there is no need to worry

because you and your parents have the Holy Spirit to help you. As your parents guide you, your siblings, and friends in solving disagreements, you all will become more sensitive to others. With time and practice, you will become effective in resolving conflicts.

Here are some steps you can practice that can help resolve disagreements:

1. Take a break and calm down.
2. No yelling, name-calling, or put-downs allowed.
3. Listen. Let each person tell their side of the story and what they feel and need.
4. Let each person repeat what they heard the other person say.
5. Take responsibility for your actions.
6. Find common ground, the things you can agree on.
7. Brainstorm solutions to the conflict and be willing to compromise.
8. Be willing to apologize, affirm, and/or forgive.
9. Pick a solution and try it! (Sometimes it helps to write the solution plan down and have all parties sign the agreement to follow the plan.)
10. Give it some time and then follow-up to see how the solution is working out.

Psalm 133:1 says, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” As you learn to lessen your conflicts, and to effectively solve them when they do occur, you will live out the meaning of this verse. God will be proud of you. You, your siblings, and peers will be able to live together in unity. How pleasant that will be!

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how to identify conflict.
- Lead children in a discussion about what causes conflict.

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 4:1-12

The story about the conflict with brothers Cain and Abel.

Colossians 3:14

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thoughts.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

- Lead children in a discussion about why it is important to your future to learn to resolve conflict.
- Lead children in a discussion about the consequences of unresolved conflict.
- Lead children in a discussion about steps to take to solve conflict.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

“Resolve the Conflict 1” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/SOBpSK1fEZ0> “Everyday Conflicts, Creative Solutions”

(“Everyday Conflicts, Creative Solutions” is a Preview clip, so it has some writing on the video, but it is a very good example of the lesson.)

- After children view video, distribute the “Resolve the Conflict 1” worksheet. Put the children in groups.
- Assign a conflict from the worksheet to each group. Have one group of children create a skit on the wrong way to handle the conflict and have the other group of children create a skit about a better way to resolve the conflict. If there are only enough children to create one group, have the group create a skit to act out the incorrect way and correct way to solve the problem. Film the skits if possible and allow the children to view themselves.
- An additional video to support the lesson is: https://youtu.be/DvSk5T_OUfU “Social Skills Training: Resolving Disagreements”

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

"Resolve the Conflict 2" worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/4gQOZLdHIHM>

"In the Mix: Peer Mediation—A Process of Respect"

- After children view video, distribute the "Resolve the Conflict 2" worksheet. Put the children in groups.
- Assign a conflict from the worksheet to each group. Have one group of children create a skit on the wrong way to handle the conflict and have the other group of children create a skit about a better way to resolve the conflict. If there are only enough children to create one group, have the group create a skit to act out the incorrect way and correct way to solve the problem. Film the skits if possible and allow the children to view themselves.
- An additional video to support the lesson is:
https://youtu.be/KZ_hqpadQRQ



Scripture SUPPORT

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the LORD forgave you.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Psalms 133:1

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I SHOW RESPECT FOR OTHERS
WHEN FINDING A SOLUTION
TO A CONFLICT?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

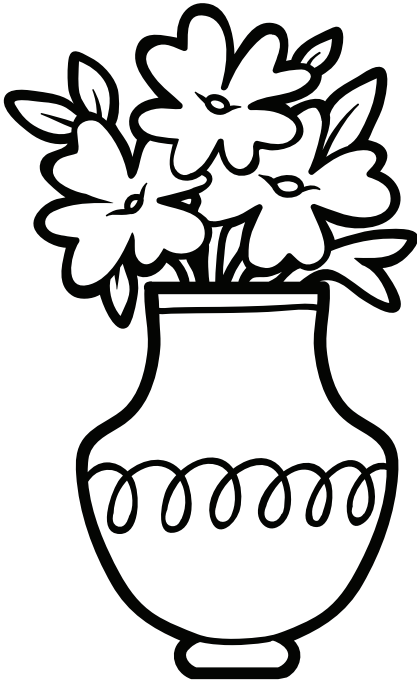


AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

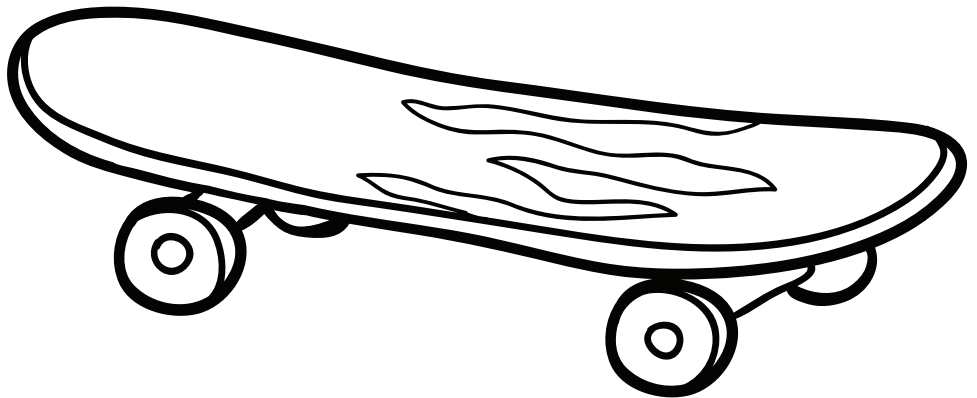
*I am becoming more
and more effective at
resolving conflicts!*

RESOLVE THE CONFLICT WORKSHEET

In a group, discuss the conflict scenarios below. Together, create a skit to teach the incorrect way and then the correct way to resolve each conflict. There may be more than one way to resolve each conflict.

**Scenario 1**

When you come home from school, your mom is upset because she thinks you broke her favorite vase without telling her about it. She automatically grounds you, but you know it was your brother who did it.

**Scenario 2**

You and your best friend have plans for the weekend, and you've been looking forward to hanging out all week. On Friday afternoon, your friend tells you you'll have to do it another time because he's doing something with someone else.

RESOLVE THE CONFLICT WORKSHEET

In a group, discuss the conflict scenarios below. Together, create a skit to teach the incorrect way and then the correct way to resolve each conflict. There may be more than one way to resolve each conflict.



Scenario 1

While getting ready for school, you notice your favorite sweater is missing. You figure your younger sister borrowed it, so you ask her where it is. She reluctantly pulls it out from under her bed, with a big stain on the front of it.

Scenario 2

You want to go to the movies with your friends Friday, but your parents have a different idea: They want you to go with them.



Scenario 3

A classmate has asked you for the twentieth time to borrow a pen. Every time you lend her one, you don't get it back. This time you say, "No." She gets angry and starts to yell at you.

Volunteering

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

How can you make a difference in our world? We know that Christ—through His death and resurrection—redeemed the world, but until Christ comes again, the world still feels the pain and consequences of sin.

Jesus says, in Matthew 25:44-45, “They also will answer, ‘LORD, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

Jesus says that “whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” Do you find this challenge troubling, or do you find it encouraging?

This week we are going to focus on volunteering (service learning).

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain why one should volunteer.
2. Identify ways in which a family can volunteer together.
3. State blessings gained through volunteering.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: As a family, we will give not only our money but also our time to the benefit of others.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting



Do: Leaders will need to make copies of Handout 1 (page 10) and Handout 2 (pages 11 & 12).

Welcome *5 minutes*



Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.



Ask: When you are kind to others, what happens?

One way to be kind to others is to volunteer. Now “volunteer” is a big word. What does it mean?



Say: To volunteer means to freely offer up your time and service to help others.
(<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/volunteer>)

Introduction *5 minutes*



Say: Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements (read together out loud the previous statements).



Ask: Does volunteering make a difference in the world?



Say: To see how change can make a difference, we are going to do an object lesson. (Adapted from PenniesOfTime.blogspot.)



Say: Do small things really create movement?

If our world was, in fact, water in the sink (tub or bowl), and if each act of kindness was something we dropped in the water, then we have two questions:

1. If small acts of kindness create ripples, can there be an act of kindness that is too small to create ripples?
2. Can many small acts of kindness together create as many ripples as a large one?



Do: Grab all the small things you could think of and test the theory to answer our questions:

- Sprinkles (the kind you put on cookies)
- Little rubber bands
- Marshmallows
- Toothpicks
- Leaves (big and little)
- Fossil

Fill the sink with water and start testing the theory.

First, the fossil, representing a larger service project like pulling weeds from a neighbor's yard or visiting a nursing home.

THE RESULT: SPLASH!

Second, a leaf, representing a "regular-sized" service project like making someone a meal, handing a hygiene kit to someone in need, or inviting a new friend over to play.

THE RESULT: There were ripples.

Next, a toothpick, a "regular" act of kindness like writing a nice note to someone, taking a treat to a neighbor, or giving out a homeless care kit.

THE RESULT: There were ripples.

Then, a little rubber band, representing small acts of kindness like telling someone a joke or picking up a toy they dropped without being asked.

THE RESULT: There were ripples, even with a single rubber band.

Last, a sprinkle, representing the smallest act of kindness like holding the door for someone or saying "hi."

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THE RESULT: There were ripples when we dropped a single a sprinkle!

DISCUSS

- Whether all the little things, together, could make as many ripples as the single fossil did. So,



Do: Put in a pinch of each of the items.

- Sprinkles
- Rubber bands
- Toothpicks



Ask: So, do you think that we can help others by doing little things as well as big things? Even a grain of salt causes ripples in the water.



Say: In today's session we are going to figure out what happens when we volunteer. Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain why one should volunteer.
2. Identify ways in which a family can volunteer together.
3. State blessings gained through volunteering.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: As a family, we will give not only our money but also our time to the benefit of others.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: During our meal time today, we are going to discuss how we have volunteered in the past. We will also talk about how what we did made a difference in others and our own lives.

1. Where have you volunteered in the past?
2. What were the results?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Engaging the World</i>	VOLUNTEERING

How can you make a difference in our world? We know that Christ—through His death and resurrection—redeemed the world, but until Christ comes again, the world still feels the pain and consequences of sin.

Jesus says, in Matthew 25:44-45, “They also will answer, ‘LORD, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

Jesus says that “whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” Do you find this challenge troubling, or do you find it encouraging? This week we are going to focus on volunteering (service learning).

I hope that you find it encouraging to ask: “What can I do?”

As a family, where can we begin to serve?

Lewis (2009) provides some steps (Handout 1):

1. Research your project
 - a. What would you like to do?
 - b. What might benefit the most people?
 - c. What might make the biggest difference?
 - d. What can I afford (in terms of time, money, etc.)?
 - e. What is really possible for me to do?
 - f. What _____? (add your own question)

Today we are going to work through these questions in small groups. Hopefully, what we learn through this process will help us

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implement a similar process with our children.

Get together in small groups and work through these questions.

Once you identified some possible ways to serve as a family, answer the following questions (Handout 1):

- How often will you do the project?
- Where will you serve?
- What do you hope to achieve?
- What is the cost (time, money, etc.)?
- Is it realistic?
- Consider the recipients—what are their needs?

Apply each of the questions to the project that your small group previously developed.

Where can you get ideas for service projects?

A few books that are helpful:

Lewis, Barbara A. (2009). *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit.

Rochester, C., Paine, A, & Howlett, S. (2012). *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. New York: Macmillan.

Sundem, Garth. (2010). *Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change: Courageous Actions Around the World*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit.

Thompson, Laurie Ann. (2014). *Be a Changemaker: How to Start Something That Matters*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Here are some broad topics (Lewis, 2009):

- Animals
- Politics and government
- Community development
- Crime fighting
- The environment
- Friendship
- Health and wellness
- Homelessness

- Hunger
- Literacy
- People with special needs
- Seniors
- Safety
- Transportation

Remember at the beginning of the lesson, we did the object lesson on how even small things produce change (toothpicks made ripples in the water)? What will happen when you impact the world for Christ?

ACTIVITY

Handout 2

How did Jesus model service or volunteering?

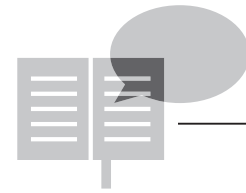
Jesus says, in Matthew 25:44-45, “They also will answer, ‘LORD, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you’ve learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

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Scripture SUPPORT



John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Luke 10:30

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Matthew 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Malachi 3:18

And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Matthew 25:44-45

“They also will answer, ‘LORD, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

Handout 1

1. Research your project

a. What would you like to do? _____

b. What might benefit the most people?

c. What might make the biggest difference?

d. What can I afford (in terms of time, money, etc.)? _____

e. What is really possible for me to do? _____

f. What _____? (add your own question) _____

Handout 2

Identifying the Impact of Volunteering

	PHYSICAL IMPACT	PERSONAL IMPACT	ECONOMIC IMPACT	SOCIAL IMPACT	CULTURAL IMPACT
Volunteers					
Organization					
Service Users					
Community					

Adapted from Rochester, Ellis, and Howlett, 2012

Handout 2 (Continued)

Potential Answers

	PHYSICAL IMPACT	PERSONAL IMPACT	ECONOMIC IMPACT	SOCIAL IMPACT	CULTURAL IMPACT
Volunteers	Training, certificates	Personal development such as confidence, self-esteem.	The financial cost of volunteering	Increased trust	Appreciation and understanding of other cultures
Organization	Measured number of meals served, trees planted, etc.	Diversity of workforce	Value of volunteering minus the cost of volunteering	Increased status and reputation	Services more reflective of cultural diversity within the community
Service Users	Improved quantity and quality of services provided	Personal development and skills enhancement	Access to services that would otherwise have to be paid for	Trust cooperation	Appreciation and understanding of others cultures
Community	Improved quantity and quality of services provided	Happier communities, better-skilled citizens	Enhanced value of money in public services. Lower crime; increased health.	Increased networks, trust and participation	Increased networks, trust and participation

Adapted from Rochester, Ellis, and Howlett, 2012

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging the World

VOLUNTEERING

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about volunteering and serving.
- Help children be aware of why a person should volunteer.
- Help children be aware of ways they can volunteer.
- Help children be aware of the blessings attained through volunteering.

In our past lessons, we have learned that God created us in His own image. He wants us to be His children, and He wants to be a Father to us. Then later, He sent His Son, Jesus to walk on earth and demonstrate for us the kind of people He wanted us to be. The Bible is filled with stories about what Jesus was like and the things He did to help others. Matthew 20:28 says, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Yes, Jesus came to serve others, and because we are created in the image of God, just like His Son Jesus came to serve, God also wants His earthly children to serve. So, our lives here on earth are not just about ourselves; instead, our lives are about the betterment of God’s entire creation.

Because Jesus Himself doesn’t walk the earth in person any longer, we are created

to show His love and His care for others by our actions. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” We serve realizing that we are doing the work that God specifically created us to do. When God created you, He placed inside you specific gifts and abilities to bring to the earth. As you grow and learn more and more about yourself, you become aware of what your special gifts and abilities are. God expects us to use our gifts and abilities to make the world around us a better place. In 1 Peter 4:10 God tells us, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

When God created man and woman, He made them and their children stewards over the earth. A steward is one who handles

affairs for someone else. We all are stewards handling God's affairs here in the earth. As God's stewards, we have the responsibility to manage, care for, and improve what He has entrusted to our care. Stewards are servants, and servants are ones who respond to the needs of others. God wants us to have a heart of sacrificial service that worships Him through our actions. When you give of yourself to help others, you make the world a better place, and that makes God very proud of you. That is true worship!

Those of us who grow up in a Christian home are truly blessed because we begin to learn about Jesus at a very early age. We are taught the stories about Him feeding the hungry and healing the sick and telling others about the kingdom of God. Most of us attend church with our parents, go to Sunday School, attend Vacation Bible School, and take part in family devotion time. This helps us know more about God and His Son, Jesus. When you ask Jesus to come into your life and be your personal Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. The Holy Spirit comes to help you, to guide you, to comfort you, and to teach you the way to live for God. As the Holy Spirit works inside you, your heart begins to feel more love and compassion for others, and your behaviors start to change. And the more we hear about Jesus, read our Bible, and spend time worshiping and praising Him, the more we desire to be like Him... and Jesus was a servant.

The Bible teaches us that it doesn't do us any good to just learn about Jesus if we don't put what we learn to action. James 1:22 Says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." When we take the time to look around us, it is easy to discover that there are many people in the world who are not as fortunate as we are. We also become aware of areas of decay, disorder, neglect, and injustice in the world. There is a verse that tells us that because we have been given so many blessings, much more is expected of us (Luke 12:48). We are God's people, and He expects us to be good stewards of the earth and those in the earth. God expects His children to use the gifts and

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abilities He gave them to help solve these problems. In Acts 20:35, the apostle Paul says it this way, “ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

As Christians, we have a unique opportunity to give on behalf of God! God has assigned His children a very important role to play as stewards over His creation. Volunteering is a wonderful way to fulfill that role as we demonstrate God’s love while we serve in the earth. Not only that, but volunteering develops in our hearts compassion, empathy, tolerance, gratitude, and community responsibility.

No matter how small your contribution may seem to you, when you volunteer, you are doing your part to accomplish God’s purposes for the world. Through volunteering, you come to realize that little acts can make a big difference in the lives of others.

There are many ways you can volunteer. There are one-time projects like collecting children’s books and donating them to a homeless shelter or shoveling snow or raking the leaves in a neighbor’s yard. Then there are longer commitments like regularly visiting an elderly family member or friend at a nursing facility and reading with them or playing a board game. Other examples include walking an elderly neighbor’s dog or putting on protective gloves and picking up litter in your neighborhood. These are just a few of the ways good stewards can share God’s love and care for His creation.

Pray and ask God how and where He would like for you to serve. When you do, the Holy Spirit will show you just how you can help in a situation and be a blessing to someone. And when you find a way to lend a hand, do it with a heart of love, compassion, and joy! First Corinthians 10:31 says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” Remember, when you volunteer, you are giving, and God loves a cheerful giver!

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible says about volunteering and serving.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God's children should volunteer.
- Lead children in a discussion about the ways children can serve and volunteer.
- Lead children in a discussion about how volunteering is giving.
- Lead children in a discussion about why the Bible says it is more blessed to give than receive.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video
Volunteer Pledge Form worksheet
Pencils, crayons, or markers
Easel or White Board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/EkHdbhIV3Ro>

"Helping Our Community" (If possible. If not possible, do exercise without video).

- After viewing the video, discuss briefly reasons why we should volunteer and possible ways to volunteer.
- As a group, write ideas on the easel or whiteboard. Then have children fill out their "My Volunteer Pledge Form" worksheet.



Scripture SUPPORT

Matthew 20:28

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Ephesians 2:10

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

1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.



Scripture SUPPORT

Luke 12:48

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

1 Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

Volunteer Pledge Form worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or White Board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/8gO6HcSeTs> "Kids Helping Kids"

and/or <https://youtu.be/YplwSTP2gdA>

"Kids Volunteering" (If possible) If not possible, do exercise without video.

- After viewing the video, discuss briefly reasons we should volunteer.
- Put children in pairs or groups of three. In their group, have them come up with possible ways to volunteer. Have them fill out their "My Volunteer Pledge Form" worksheet. Have students share with large group some of their ways to volunteer ideas.

My Volunteer Pledge Form

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others,
as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10

Name _____

I will pledge to volunteer _____ hours every month.

Here are some of the ways I plan to volunteer:

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

4. _____.

5. _____.

Signed _____ Date _____



CHALLENGE QUESTION

HOW DO I SERVE THE LORD BY VOLUNTEERING?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I serve the LORD by
cheerfully serving others.*

Technology

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on technology. Before we begin, I would like you to think about the methods that Jesus used to teach people:

- He used mud on eyes.
- He used his voice to command Lazarus to come out of the tomb.
- He wrote in the sand with the woman who was caught in adultery.
- He modeled prayer.
- He broke bread and fed over 5,000 people.
- He used stories such as parables that related to the times.
- He used shocking statements.
- He used memorable sayings.
- He used repetition.

If Jesus walked this earth today, what other methods would he use to teach?

I believe Jesus would use the tools of today. One such tool is technology. As with every good thing, technology can be misused. We need to be prepared to keep our families safe, while at the same time, use the tools of today.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Identify resources to protect the family from dangerous technology.
2. Explain how technology can be helpful in today's world.

continued


Notes

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I will honor God with my use of technology.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Prior to Meeting

 **Do:** Leaders will need to make copies of Handout 1 (pages 8-9), Handout 2 (pages 10) and Handout 3 (pages 11-12).


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time discussing the importance of volunteering—why we should volunteer, ways in which we can volunteer, and the blessings gained through volunteering.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


Introduction 5 minutes


 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements (read together out loud the previous statements).

Before we begin, what methods did Jesus use to teach people?

 **Say:** Possible responses:

- He used mud on eyes.
- He used his voice to command Lazarus to come out of the tomb.
- He wrote in the sand with the woman who was caught in adultery.
- He modeled prayer.
- He broke bread and fed over 5,000 people.
- He used stories such as parables that related to the times.
- He used shocking statements.
- He used memorable sayings.
- He used repetition.

 **Ask:** If Jesus walked this earth today, what other methods would he use to teach?

 **Say:** I believe Jesus would use the tools of today. One such tool is technology. As with every good thing, technology can be misused. We need to be prepared to keep our families safe, while at the same time, use the tools of today.

Today's teaching objectives are to:


1. Identify resources to protect the family from dangerous technology.
2. Explain how technology can be helpful in today's world.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I will honor God with my use of technology.

Notes

Notes

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes


 **Ask:** During our meal time, think and talk about all the ways you and your family uses technology.

1. What ways do you and your family use technology?
2. Before the technology was invented, what was used instead?
3. Which way is better?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Overview

 **Ask:** What do these abbreviations mean? (from iRules)

ASL (age, sex, location)

BFF (best friends forever)

BRB (be right back)

HBU (how 'bout you)

HMU (hit me up)

IDC (I don't care)

ILY(2) (I love you (too)

IRL (In real life)

LOL (laugh/laughing out loud)

OH (overheard)

OMG (oh my God/goodness)

OMW (on my way)

PAW(parents are watching)

ROLF (rolling on the floor laughing)

RT (retweet)

TIA (Thanks in advance)

TMI (Too much information)

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging the World

TECHNOLOGY

Jesus used a number of methods to teach:

- **Jesus's use of repetition:** Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34
- **Object lessons:** John 13:3-17, Matthew 18:1-4, Mark 12:41-44
- **Asking questions:** Matthew 16:26, 22:20-21
- **Memorable sayings:** Luke 6:37-38, Luke 6:31
- **Stories:** Mark 4:34

(From <http://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2014/03/10/6-preaching-methods-jesus-used-that-you-should-too/>)

So where do we begin? Should we use technology within our families?

In an article adapted from <https://www.faithandsafety.org/-/using-technology-in-a-christian-way>, it says:

In his Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says, “Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.” [1] Our actions, words, and lifestyle are all essential parts of living the true Christian life. The power of all these digital devices provides us with an almost unprecedented opportunity to follow St. Paul’s words.

Our use of technology should be consistent with our Christian faith. Our digital communications and the content we create and share should all be positive examples to others. That isn’t always the case. Sometimes, we may use the gift of technology—accidentally or on purpose—in inappropriate ways.

As Christians, we need a guideline to help us determine if our intended actions are consistent with or run contrary to our faith.

Of course, thinking about technology in this way might seem a bit strange. We live, after all, in the nation of “why not?” We love the

new and get excited about the many things that we stand to gain with each new gadget. Rarely do we stop to consider whether we really need to check out that new web site or buy that new device. After all, “why not”?

Before engaging in any online behavior, we would do well to change our perspective by considering several questions:

1. Why am I engaging in this activity?
2. Is this activity spiritually beneficial to me or another person?
3. Will my activities directly or indirectly hurt, harm, or embarrass another person?
4. Would Christ approve of my actions or activities?

If we cannot answer even one of these questions appropriately, then we shouldn’t engage in that activity or behavior. As St. Paul said, we should set an example for others. Therefore, let’s prayerfully reflect on the power and capabilities gifted to us through these new technologies. May we always use those capabilities with wisdom and discernment for God’s glory.

How do you keep your family safe?

DISCUSS

Review Handouts 1 & 2

- As you go through the handouts, ask participants to respond on how they are feeling or thinking about the information. What are some things you wish you would have started sooner than later?

One concern is the easy access of porn through technology.

Review Handout 3

- As you go through the handout, ask participants to respond on how they are feeling or thinking about the information.

How about a little experiment?

Do you need to detox (or e-tox) from electronics?

Have the whole family try it for one day or weekend.
Talk about how the experience made everyone feel.

We covered so much in today's lesson.

By now, you should be able to:

1. Identify resources to protect the family from dangerous technology.
2. Explain how technology can be helpful in today's world.

This week's commitment statement is: I will honor God with my use of technology.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Handout 1

All safety—especially mobile and online safety—begins at home. The habits you exhibit about technology use in your home will be the same habits your children learn. Ask yourself what you consider appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology and then compare that with how you might be acting.

Do you use your phone at the dinner table? Do you text while talking with others? Do you instantly pull out your phone when a new message arrives? Do you text while driving? Do you use computers in public areas of the house or do you habitually bring them into your bedroom behind a closed door? Model the behavior you yourself expect from your children.

In addition to your living example, consider following some of these steps:

1. Use antivirus, Firewall, and antimalware software.

These software packages provide a baseline of protection. However, also make sure you and your kids don't visit file sharing websites or open email attachments from people you don't know or open attachments that look suspicious. There are many software packages available. Here are a few places to start:

Antivirus software for PC (<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2372364,00.asp>)

Antivirus software for Macs (<https://home.sophos.com/mac>)

2. Put all computers in a public space.

A central place in the house where you can see what is on the screen is preferred. Don't put computers in kids' rooms. Refrain from using laptops in bedrooms or private areas. If computers absolutely must be put in a private room, have a policy that doors must be open when they are in use. Internet connected devices in concealed areas just offers kids too much unnecessary temptation.

3. Review where your kids go online.

Let your kids know that you will be periodically reviewing the sites that all of you, as a family, visit. Don't do this in an authoritarian way, but rather to engage your kids in dialogue.

4. Teach internet safety.

It may seem self-evident, but before you let your kids loose online, teach them ethical behavior and Internet basics, which include:

- Make sure they use strong passwords.
- Do not give out personal or identifiable information about themselves or their family.
- Do not talk to strangers online.
- Remind kids that nothing on the Internet is private and that people online are not always truthful and may not be who they say are.

Handout 1 (Continued)

5. Review internet safety with your kids.

Once you've taught your kids some basics, review those basics and even do some roleplay. Just because you have told your children something doesn't mean that they will be able to do it. Roleplaying can help.

6. Discuss what your kids see online.

Interact with your children regularly about their online behavior. Computers are not baby sitters or a substitute for interactive parenting.

7. Consider an online contract as a family.

Several websites offer "family internet use contracts" that clearly define the boundaries for Internet usage, what they should ask for, and permissible behavior. Both parents and kids sign the contract.

8. Promote safety in your parish.

Provide internet safety literature (such as this guide) in the church narthex, vestibule, or other locations where you distribute parish information. You can publish internet safety tips from this publication in the print and digital editions of your weekly or monthly parish bulletins.

There are many other things that you can do, which will be defined in more detail in the following sections. However, we want to reiterate something that you will see in several places throughout this guide: you, your example, and your attitudes are among the most important parts of any safety plan for your family. Internet safety starts with you!

adapted from <https://www.faithandsafety.org/promoting-safety-in-your-home>

Handout 2

Social Media Contract for Kids

SETTING UP

- ☐ I will ask my parents' permission before joining any social media site.
- ☐ I will allow my parents to set my privacy settings and parental control settings on all my accounts.
- ☐ I will give my parents my passwords for all my social media accounts.
- ☐ I will NOT give my passwords to anyone other than my parents.
- ☐ I will NOT change any of my passwords without my parents' permission.
- ☐ I will NOT set up any private or secret social media accounts.

SHARING

- ☐ I will NOT post or share my name, age, address, school, interests, or other personal information without my parents' permission.
- ☐ I will NOT post or share photos of myself without my parents' permission.
- ☐ I will NOT post or share photos of my family or my friends without their permission.
- ☐ I will NOT post or share offensive or inappropriate images, language, video, or other content.

CONDUCT

- ☐ I will NOT meet anyone in person who I have met through social media.
- ☐ I will NOT engage in online bullying including leaving unkind comments on other's posts or photos.
- ☐ I will let my parents know if I am the victim of online bullying.
- ☐ I will meet academic standards set by my parents.
- ☐ I will follow my parents' rules regarding time limits for online use.
- ☐ I understand that the posting of certain types of photos and information on social media sites is punishable by law.

CONSEQUENCES

I understand that I risk the following consequences for violating any of the above:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I, _____, agree to the above conditions for using social media. I also understand that my parents are setting these conditions because they love me and want to keep me safe.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

<http://www.imom.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/imom-social-media-contract-for-kids-color.pdf>

Handout 3

Technology and Pornography

Many people who use pornography think that it doesn't hurt anyone. After all, they might think, they are just looking at pictures—not real people. However, research has shown that pornography is harmful in three ways.

First, pornography harms the brain of the person who is using pornography.

- Looking at pornography makes the brain release the same chemical that drugs do. People can easily become addicted to pornography, craving more and more. Just like drugs, a person needs to look at more pornography and more extreme types of pornography to get the same levels of excitement.
- Using pornography can even shrink a person's frontal lobe, which is the part of the brain used for self-control and making decisions.

Second, pornography harms the person's ability to have loving, meaningful relationships with others.

- Using pornography sets unrealistic standards that no real person can meet. Pornography shows people who are airbrushed and photoshopped to look more attractive than they actually are and more attractive than anybody could ever be.
- In one study, men who spent a few minutes looking at Playboy said that their wives were less attractive than men who looked at another magazine. They also said that they were less in love with their wives! If looking at pornography for just a short amount of time has these effects, imagine what happens to people who use pornography on a regular basis.
- When the partner of a person who uses pornography finds out about it, the partner often feels angry, embarrassed, guilty, or like they can never measure up. Some partners question their entire relationship and doubt that the other person loves them.

Third, pornography harms society.

- There is always someone on the other side of the camera. Quite often, women who are involved in the pornography industry are not in it by choice. Instead, many women are victims of sex trafficking and are held against their will. If they don't cooperate with making the pornography, their lives may be in danger.
- Over 75% of pornography contains physical violence, but the victims of the aggression almost always appear to be fine with it—or even happy.

Handout 3 (Continued)

The good news is that there is help for anyone who is caught up in pornography.

Some resources include:

- Fight the New Drug (fightthenewdrug.org)
- Sex Addicts Anonymous (saa-recovery.org)
- Qualified counselors and therapists

Many children are first exposed to pornography at a very young age. The average age that children first see pornography is eight years old. That means that some children first see pornography even before that! Children might accidentally stumble across pornography on a computer, phone, or tablet. Or, another child or even an adult might show them pornography. Because children might see pornography at such a young age, parents should talk to their children about pornography even earlier. The book *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids* is a great book that parents can read with their children as young as five years old. Some points from this book include:

1. Explaining what pornography is.

Pornography can be pictures or videos of people who don't have clothes on to cover the parts of their body that are covered by a swimsuit.

2. Telling the child that they are not bad if they see pornography.

Until they see it, children don't just go looking for pornography. They see pornography for the first time because they stumble on it by accident or because someone else shows it to them. They shouldn't feel guilty if this happens to them.

3. Teaching that pornography can affect a person's brain.

Seeing pornography makes a person's "feeling brain" release chemicals that can make the person want to see even more pornography. That's why it's so important for children to use their "thinking brain" if they ever see pornography. If they use their "thinking brain," they can use their plan of what to do if they see pornography.

4. Planning for what to do if the child sees pornography.

This plan should include:

- Looking away and turning off the device immediately.
- Telling a parent or trusted adult.
- Making sure they use their "thinking brain" instead of their "feeling brain."

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging the World

TECHNOLOGY

Objectives

- Help children be aware of positive uses of technology.
- Help children be aware of dangers of technology.
- Help children be aware of their responsibility in the use of technology.

“Technology” is something that human beings create to help us accomplish more than we would be able to accomplish without it—whether that is just improving a process or device from earlier years or doing something that was entirely impossible before. Technology benefits us in many ways. It helps streamline schedules, simplify work, coordinate activities, stay in contact with loved ones who are far away. Technology makes it possible for us to communicate with people in remote places in the world. These are just some of the ways technology makes our lives easier and better. If Jesus walked the earth today, I believe He would use the tools of technology to spread the good news about

the kingdom of God. But as with every good thing, technology can be misused.

The internet, social media, mobile phones, tablets, and movies have become a noticeable part of family life. Though there are many positive benefits that technology brings into our lives, there are also some pitfalls that we need to be aware of. Besides evil, devious acts such as cyber bullying and identity theft, researchers now say that overuse of technology negatively affects a child’s development, which diminishes academic achievement. Other problems caused by overuse of technological devices include childhood obesity, sleep deprivation, aggressive behavior, addiction, unhealthy exposure

to radiation and more. Overuse of technology can also impair children's ability to socialize and interact with others. If you're not careful, it can even damage your closeness with your family. So, we need to be aware and wise about our use of technology.

Technology is all around us. It is so much a part of our lives that we hardly even think about it. For children there's Minecraft, Pokémon, NBA 2. For older children there's Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, WhatsApp, kik Messenger, and Instagram. And don't forget to include video games, laptops, and numerous other gadgets children are fascinated with today. All these apps, websites, and gizmos can be okay when used appropriately and respectfully with parent guidance and monitoring.

Digital Media consumes the hours of time children used to spend playing with their siblings, friends, and neighborhood buddies. Because of overuse of technology, time spent together as a family has lessened greatly. According to researchers, 8 to 10-year-old children are daily exposed to almost eight hours of on-screen media, and as children grow older, that time frame increases. Before the internet, children had to go to the library to do research. Now, with just a click, a child can find any information they are looking for in minutes.

Technology is here to stay, so as Christians, it is up to us to pay attention to what the Bible says about the use of technology. What is God speaking to our hearts about our responsibility to handle this tool appropriately?

As a child of God, He is expecting you to cooperate with your parents so that you can enjoy the positive benefits of technology. God has given you the parents that are just right for you, and He has placed them as the authority in your life. In Proverbs 22:6, God tells parents, "Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." God is holding your parents accountable for keeping you safe and raising you to be the kind of person He wants you to become. He has commanded your

parents to make decisions, set rules and boundaries, and enforce obedience in every area of your life. Technology is one of those areas.

How you use technology is important to God because He realizes it has the potential to be helpful or harmful to you. As your parents ask God what guidelines to set for you and your family about technology, the Holy Spirit will help them create a plan that will keep you and your family safe online. Your responsibility is to be obedient to the guidelines your parents establish for you. Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” And don’t forget that Hebrews 12:11 says, “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

As a Christian child, you want to make sure that you are using technology in moderation and not allowing it to become an idol in your life. The definition of idol is, “A person or thing that is greatly admired, loved, or revered.” In 1 Corinthians 10:23, Paul says, “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive.” He is telling us that just because something is available to us, doesn’t mean it is good for us. As Christians, when we do decide to be involved with something, God expects us to use moderation in all things and not let anything rule us. It is very important to make good choices about the media you engage in and balance the amount of time you spend with it.

God created a beautiful, wonderful world for you to experience. He wants you to spend time enjoying the sunshine, parks, museums, zoos, sporting events, books, and most of all, spending time with your family. He also wants you to set aside some time for Him. And when you spend time praying and listening to God, The Holy Spirit will convict your heart and help you to make wise decisions about the role you allow technology to play in your

Notes

life. First Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” That includes your use of technology.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what technology is.
- Lead children in a discussion about positive uses of technology.
- Lead children in a discussion about the pitfalls of technology use.
- Lead children in a discussion of parent responsibility for setting technology guidelines for their family.
- Lead children in a discussion about their responsibility in the use of technology.
- Lead children in a discussion about other ways God wants them to spend their time.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

“Technology: The Good and the Bad” worksheet

“The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship”

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/xKEvKHEnuBk>

“Now I Know: Internet Safety” (Discuss briefly.)

(If not possible to view video, do activity without it.)

- After viewing video, in a large group, discuss briefly the good things about technology as well as the bad things about technology. (Use information from the lesson and video.) Use the whiteboard to list children’s

responses. After discussion, have children fill out the “Technology: The Good and the Bad” worksheet.

- Explain and read the “The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship.” Let children know that this is our way to make a commitment to practicing internet safety. Finally, have students sign the “The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship.”

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

“Technology: The Good and the Bad” worksheet

“The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship”

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/xKEvKHEnuBk>

“Now I Know: Internet Safety” (Discuss briefly.)

(If not possible to view video, do activity without it.)

- After viewing the video, put students in pairs. Have them work together to fill out the “Technology: The Good and the Bad” worksheet. When they have finished, have pairs share with the group the things they have listed.
- Explain and read the “The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship.” Let children know that this is our way to make a commitment to practicing internet safety. Finally, have students sign the “The Family Contract for Digital Citizenship.”



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.

Hebrews 12:11

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

1 Corinthians 10:23

“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I PRACTICE INTERNET SAFETY WHEN USING
TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

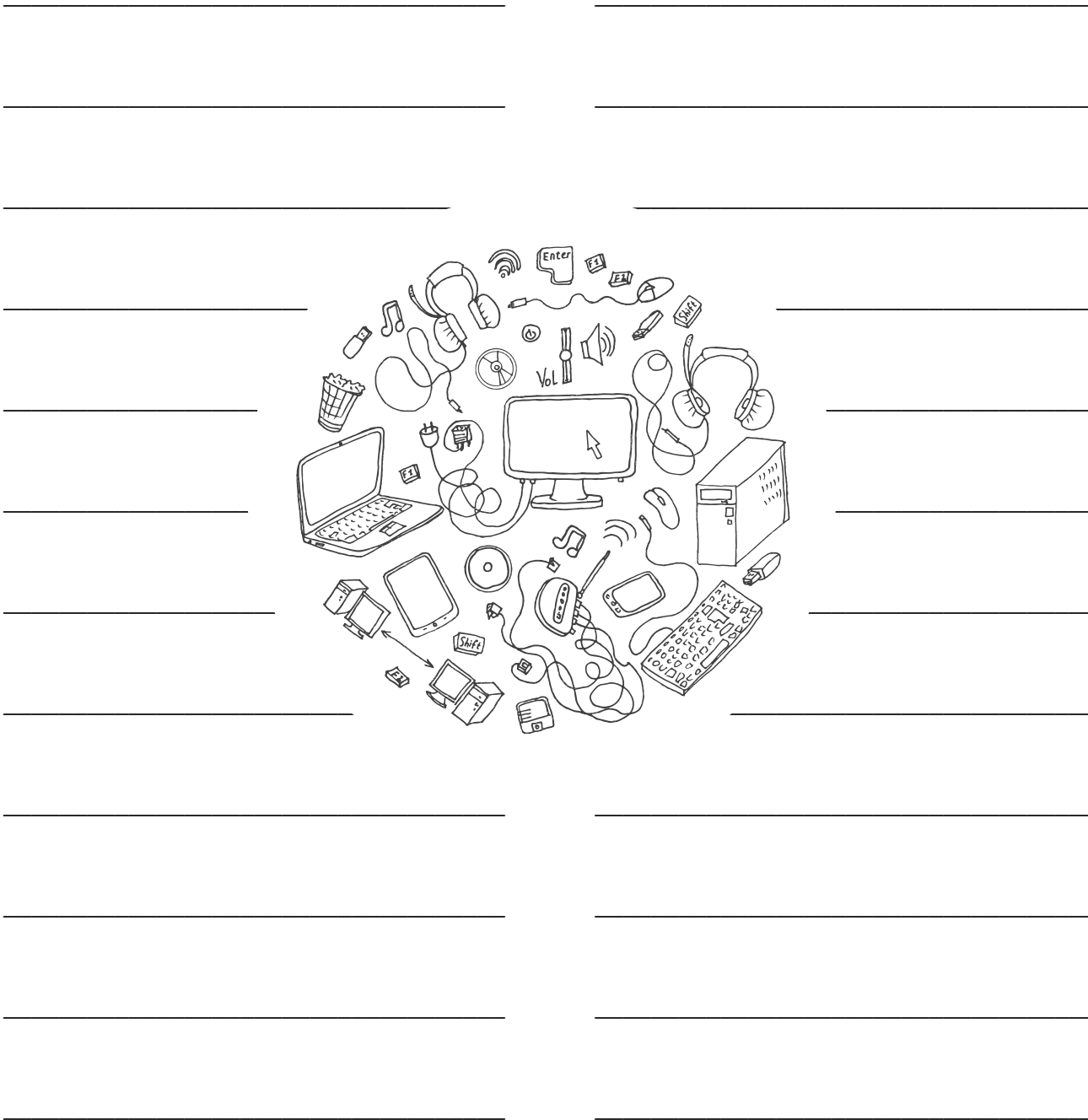
WHAT AM I WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I use technology in a safe, moderate, and respectful way.</i>

TECHNOLOGY: THE GOOD AND THE BAD WORKSHEET

The Good:

The Bad:



FAMILY CONTRACT FOR DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Child Pledge

1. I will remember that not all people have access to or utilize technology in the same way. I will not treat others differently if they do not have the same options.
2. I will tell my parents or another responsible adult right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable. I understand that to have technology rights, I must be responsible in all my actions.
3. I will tell my parents if I experience any pain or discomfort when using technology. I will remember that I need to balance technology use with other activities.
4. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message that is inappropriate. If I do get an inappropriate message, I will tell my parents or a responsible adult right away, so they can contact the proper groups.
5. I will talk with my parents, so we can set up rules for making online purchases. We will decide if and when online purchases can be made, and which sites are secure for me to use.
6. I will treat others the way I wish to be treated when using technology. I will keep in mind that my technology use affects others.
7. I will check with my parents before downloading or installing software or doing anything that could possibly hurt our computer or jeopardize my family's privacy. I will also keep programs such as antivirus, spyware, and adware u-to-date to protect our information.
8. I will be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.
9. I will help my parents understand how to have fun and learn things online and teach them things about the Internet, computers, and other technology.

I agree to the above:

Child signature

I will help my child follow his agreement and will allow reasonable use of digital technology if these rules and other family rules are followed:

Parent signature

Technology Terms

Social Networking sites

The activity of creating personal and business relationships with other people especially by sharing information, photos and personal messages, etc., on the internet.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Snapchat

Micro blogging platforms

Blogging done with severe space or size constraints typically by posting frequent brief messages about personal activities.

- Tumblr
- Facebook
- Twitter

Photo Sharing App

Instagram is a mobile, desktop, and internet-based photo-sharing application and service that allows users to share pictures and videos either publicly or privately.

- Instagram

Instant Messenger

Instant messaging (IM) is a type of online chat that offers real-time text transmission over the internet.

- WhatsApp
- kik Messenger

Video Games

- Minecraft
- Pokémon
- NBA 2
- NBA 2

Preparing for College

Dear Facilitator: For several lessons we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. Today, we are going to talk about increasing wisdom and understanding.

Maybe you still remember the request from Solomon to God found in 1 Kings 3:

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

⁶ Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

⁷ “Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

¹⁰ The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴ And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” ¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

continued

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the LORD's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

We, like Solomon, are also encouraged to increase in wisdom.

Proverbs 2:1-5 says:

*My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,*

*² turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—*

*³ indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,*

*⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,*

*⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.*

How does one go about increasing in wisdom and understanding? Certainly, one needs to go to God first. Proverbs says to “look for it as silver and search for it as hidden treasure.”

One way we do so is planning for our future, including college.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Create a vision for the future.
2. Identify steps to make college a reality.
3. Commit to lifelong learning.

During the past few lessons, we made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I look for wisdom and understanding as for silver and search for it as a hidden treasure.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting



Do: Leaders will need to make copies of Handout 1 (pages 12-13).




Do: Spend some time looking at the following resources and information:


- Entry level professions: <https://thebestschools.org/careers/best-entry-level-jobs/>
- 10 Hottest jobs in Michigan in 2015: <http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/michigan/2015/01/04/michigan-hot-jobs/21235493/>
- Employment Projections: 2014-24 Summary: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>
- Fastest Growing Occupations, 2014-24: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t05.htm>
- Wind turbine service technicians: Some college, no degree
- Occupational therapy assistants: Associate degree
- Physical therapist assistants: Associate degree
- Physical therapist aides: High school diploma or equivalent
- Home health aides: No formal educational credential
- Commercial divers: Postsecondary non-degree award
- Nurse practitioners: Master's degree
- Physical therapists: Doctoral or professional degree
- Statisticians: Master's degree
- Ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians: High school diploma or equivalent
- Occupational therapy aides: High school diploma or equivalent
- Physician assistants: Master's degree
- Operations research analysts: Bachelor's degree
- Personal financial advisors: Bachelor's degree
- Cartographers and photogrammetrists: Bachelor's degree

Notes


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time discussing technology and how to honor God with our use of technology.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes


 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements (read together out loud the previous statements).


Today our topic is around navigating college.


Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Create a vision for the future.
2. Identify steps to make college a reality.
3. Commit to lifelong learning.


This week's commitment statement is: I look for wisdom and understanding as for silver and search for it as a hidden treasure.

 **Ask:** What do you want to be when you grow up?

 **Share:** Your story and your career path.

 **Say:** Jobs have changed over the centuries. In fact, I want to do an activity that shows just how much they have and will change.

 **Do:** Have 10 people stand up.

 **Say:** Each of these people represents a job.



Do: Have seven people sit down.



Say: The seven that sat down represents the number of jobs for today's students that do not even exist yet. (<https://www.successperformancesolutions.com/65-percent-of-todays-students-will-be-employed-in-jobs-that-dont-exist-yet/>).



Say: The world has certainly changed. Below is a list of jobs that no longer exist.



Ask: Guess what the employee did (answers can be found at <http://www.viralforest.com/11-jobs-longer-exist-today/>)?

- Bowling alley pinsetter
- Human alarm clock
- Ice cutter
- Pre-radar listeners for enemy aircraft
- Rat catchers
- Lamp lighter
- Milkman
- Log drivers
- Switchboard operator
- Resurrectionist
- Lector who entertained factory workers

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: Create a list of jobs that children may be interested in.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging The World

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

You are capable of great things! Today, we are going to talk about increasing wisdom and understanding. God has created each of us in a unique way (Psalm 139).

Maybe you still remember the request from Solomon to God found in 1 Kings 3:

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

⁶ Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day."

⁷ "Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little

child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that

there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings.¹⁴ And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the LORD’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

We, like Solomon, are also encouraged to increase in wisdom.

Proverbs 2:1-5 says:

*My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,*

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*³ indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,*

*⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,*

*⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.*

How does one go about increasing in wisdom and understanding? Certainly, one needs to go to God first. Proverbs says to “look for it as silver and search for it as hidden treasure.”

One way we do so is planning for our future, which may include college.

JOBS OF THE FUTURE

Ben Schiller envisions new jobs for 2025. (<https://www.fastcompany.com/3015652/futurist-forum/8-new-jobs-people-will-have-in-2025?>)

What do you think are the following jobs?

1. Digital Death Manager

Answer: “Life-logging” will be a way of life, affecting how we record and remember what we do. Young sees a role for someone who can take the mass of life-logged material and make stories out of it. That could be useful during our lives (for personal-brand purposes) but also in death. “Today, it happens only with important people. Andy Warhol has a foundation and so on. We’re imagining this is going to ladder down to other people who want to shape what their legacy means,” Young says.

2. Un-Schooling Counselor

Answer: The concept of education as a four-year box-ticking exercise will be over. The future will be more diverse. People will plug in a year of education here and there, a month now and again, and un-schooling counselors will guide them the whole way. “We’re seeing the evolution of the traditional counselor to someone who can hack your life together so it’s unique,” he says.

3. Armchair Explorer

Answer: Machines will be connected, producing tons of data about their performance and surroundings. Communications technology that has been expensive in the past (like satellites) will be widely accessible. This will create opportunities for “armchair explorers” who will travel the world, checking on systems, buildings, and hard-to-reach places. We’ll need people to break through the fog and give us a clear picture.

4. 3-D Printing Handyman

Answer: Today when your handyman fixes something, he usually has to order a spare part

from China. One day, he might print it right in your yard. Say you need to replace the pipe under your sink. Why wait for the whole thing to come in from out of the country, when it can be done there and then? We already have 3-D printed shower heads, after all.

5. Microbial Balancer

Answer: From the gut to your mouth, the microbial world is a big focus of current research. Young sees a job for a “microbial balancer” who can keep you aligned with your bacteria: “They will understand how to read your genome, your gut, and your mouth bacteria and get you better balanced at a house, school, or individual level. They’re the equivalent of the Feng Shui person who sets up your apartment.”

6. Corporate Disorganizer

Answer: Big companies want to be more like startups, seeing innovation as vital to future profits. Young says they’ll want “corporate disorganizers” who can introduce a little “organized chaos.” Young says: “The disruptor will be tapping into the new systems of the collaborative economy, creating greater fragmentation and a more distributed ecosystem.”

7. Digital Detox Specialist

Answer: The digital “overload” will become even more overwhelming. That will open the way for people who can help lead less data-centric lives, or at least find a better balance. In some cases, they will even organize digital rehabs. It’s going to get that bad (actually, it already is).

8. The Urban Shepherd

Answer: With cities getting greener, we’ll need “urban shepherds” to look after the new infrastructure. “You need someone who is going to take care of the urban beehives, who’s going to make sure your composting is set up correctly, and who is going to know how to curate all the vertical gardens,” Young says.

Notes

Notes

Whether you are in grade school, high school, or even an adult, college can be an option.

How does one prepare for college?

Being a lifelong learner, meaning always wanting to learn something new, will help as jobs change. So why is learning so important?

Here are some quotes:

"Find something you're passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it." **Julia Child**

"I'm always open for people saying I'm wrong because most of the time I am." **Prince William**

"It's only when you risk failure that you discover things. When you play it safe, you're not expressing the utmost of your human experience." **Lupita Nyong'o**

"I can never be safe; I always try and go against the grain. As soon as I accomplish one thing, I just set a higher goal. That's how I've gotten to where I am." **Beyonce Knowles**

"You can teach a student a lesson for a day, but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives." **Clay P. Bedford**

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." **John Dewey**

"The excitement of learning separates youth from old age. As long as you're learning you're not old." **Rosalyn S. Yalow**

"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow." **Anthony J. D'Angelo**

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." **Alvin Toffler**

Adapted from <http://impowerage.com/not-too-late/start-something/inspirational-lifelong-learning-quotes> and <https://www.whitbyschool.org/passionforlearning/inspiring-quotes-about-learning-from-ib-and-montessori-graduates>

ACTIVITY

In small groups, have participants create a list of ways to prepare for lifelong learning, both from the quotes above and their own personal experience.

Have groups share lessons.

Handout: Review components of handout, discussing points of interest.

Lifelong learning and preparing for college—these are two big topics. While we did not cover them completely, you should still be able to:

1. Create a vision for the future.
2. Identify steps to make college a reality.
3. Commit to lifelong learning.

This week's commitment statement is: I look for wisdom and understanding as for silver and search for it as a hidden treasure.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Handout 1

COLLEGE PREPARATION ONLINE GUIDE

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

- **Entry level professions**
<https://thebestschools.org/careers/best-entry-level-jobs/>
- **10 Hottest jobs in Michigan in 2015**
<http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/michigan/2015/01/04/michigan-hot-jobs/21235493/>
- **Employment Projections 2014-24 Summary**
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>
- **Fastest Growing Occupations, 2014-24**
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t05.htm>

ACT/SAT

- **SAT Information**
www.collegeboard.org
- **SAT Fee Waiver Instructions**
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees/feewaivers.html
- **Preliminary SAT (PSAT)**
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html
- **ACT Information**
www.actstudent.org
- **ACT Fee Waiver Instructions**
www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html
- **Khan Academy SAT/ACT prep classes**
www.khanacademy.org

COLLEGES/COLLEGE FAIRS

- **Petersons**
www.petersons.com
- **Go to College Fairs**
www.gotocollegefairs.com

Handout 1 (Continued)

FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIP

- **Federal Student Aid**
<https://fafsa.ed.gov>
- **TRIO Federal Program**
www.studentaid.ed.gov
- **Fast Web**
www.fastweb.com
- **Find Tuition**
www.findtuition.com
- **Sallie Mae**
www.salliemae.com
- **US News Report**
<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/paying-for-college>

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATION AND RESEARCH/POLICY

- **National Association for College Admission Counseling**
www.nacanet.org
- **United Negro College Fund (UNCF)**
www.uncf.org
- **Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities**
www.hacu.net/hacu/Default_EN.asp
- **National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education**
www.nafew.org/home.php

CAREERS

- **Resource Links**
www.careersprep.com/html/links.html
- **The Occupational Handbook**
www.bls.gov/oco

PREPARATION

Freshmen Year:

- Meet your counselor
- Lay out a four-year plan
- Connect every semester to review your grades and plan

Sophomore Year

- Stay motivated
- Go to college fairs and ask questions
- Take a practice ACT/SAT test

Junior Year

- “Best grades ever” year
- Prepare and take ACT/SAT
- Visit at least one college campus

Senior Year

- Apply to schools at the start of the first semester
- Apply for financial aid
- Apply for scholarships

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging The World

**BUILDING STRONG
FRIENDSHIPS**

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about humans being made in God's image.
- Help children be aware that God has a plan for their life.
- Help children be aware of God putting man and woman in charge of His beautiful creation.
- Help children be aware of why God needed man to be intelligent and wise.
- Help children be aware of the difference between knowledge and wisdom.
- Help children be aware of importance of being a lifelong learner.
- Help children be aware of importance of college.
- Help children be aware of how to prepare for college.

When God created man, He said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Humans are the only creatures that God made in His likeness. Then God made us stewards and put humans in charge of His beautiful creation. A steward is a person

who manages another's property and/or affairs. Because God placed humans in charge of His affairs, He needed them to be intelligent and wise. So, He gave humans a superior brain like no other living thing in His creation.

This brain that God gave exclusively to humans is part of our amazing bodies we have been blessed with. Psalm 139:14 says,

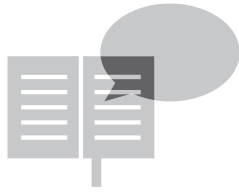
“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” God gave us our phenomenal brains because He wants us to be continually learning and growing wiser. God wants His children to be curious and have a desire to be lifelong learners so that they can become all that He created them to be. God has great plans for your life! In Jeremiah 29:11, God says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

God wants us to have wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is information that is acquired over time. It is about facts and ideas that we learn through study, experience, research, or observation. Wisdom is the ability to judge or discern what is true or right. For example, knowledge is knowing how to use a phone; wisdom is knowing when to use it and when to keep it put away. Knowledge is memorizing verses in the Bible; wisdom is doing what those verses tell us to do. Proverbs 16:16 says that having wisdom and understanding is better than having silver or gold. An education is something that makes you better prepared in life and can never be taken away. Your education is important to God.

As young children, our parents place us in educational settings where we are taught information and grow in our knowledge (daycare and preschool). Then we are ready for the beginning of our formal education, and we enter kindergarten! As a Christian, it is important that while you are gaining knowledge through your secular schooling and that you are also acquiring godly knowledge and wisdom at home and in your church. Your educational journey is intended to expose you to information and experiences that will help you perfect your God given gift and mold you into the person that God created you to be.

That is why your parents pray for your salvation. They know that when you accept Christ as your personal Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalms 139:14

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

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Proverbs 16:16

How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver!

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

John 14:26

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

you and help you grow in wisdom and knowledge about what you are learning at school and in the world around you. In John 14:26, Jesus says, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” So, we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us have true knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Luke 2:52 says, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” And God wants you to grow in wisdom and stature and favor also.

God wants you to develop a passion for learning, and schooling is a part of God’s plan for your life. We are promoted from grade to grade as we complete elementary and middle school. Finally, we are proud to enter high school and begin focusing on meeting graduation requirements. High school years pass by quickly, so for those intending to go to college after high school completion, the planning begins. There are many colleges that may interest you, but for a Christian young person, a Christian college is an important consideration. So, with the counsel of your parents and your school guidance counselor, choose a college carefully. Look at all of the options and pray about your decision. Hopefully, by the time you are in high school, you have accepted Christ as your Savior, and you have the help of the Holy Spirit with your studies and college planning.

As college approaches, the pinnacle of your formal educational journey, here are some helpful suggestions that will make sure you are college ready when the time comes (See Handout 1). And remember, Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” In other words, as you pursue higher education, keep God first in your life, and you will be successful.

Earning a college degree will give you a head start moving into a successful career as a steward focused leader. College also enriches your mind and opens the door to new people, places, and

friendships. Education is no substitute for anointing, and Christian college grads will be happily prepared with both—education and anointing. With your gift, anointing, wisdom, knowledge, and college degree in hand, you will be ready for God to use you for His glory and the betterment of His creation.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about humans being given superior brains because we are created in God's image.
- Lead children in a discussion about God having a plan for their life to use their gift for His glory.
- Lead children in a discussion about God needing man and women to be intelligent and wise to be good stewards to oversee and manage His creation.
- Lead children in a discussion about difference between wisdom and knowledge.
- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of college to develop to their fullest potential.
- Lead children in a discussion about the steps to prepare for college.



Scripture SUPPORT

Luke 2:52

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

“Thinking About My Future Career” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/ZR1bvJQrgSI>

“Importance of College--Kids On Campus 2016”.

- After the video, discuss briefly the importance of going to college. Have children think about what kind of work they would like to do in the future. (Use information from video and lesson.)
- Then have students fill out “Thinking About My Future Career” worksheet. When they are finished,

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

“Getting Ready for Higher Education” worksheet

(Place worksheets back to back)

“Timeline to Success” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/U6jw-KvIIMU> “Welcome to College for Middle School and High School Student.”

- After the video, discuss briefly the importance of going to college. Have children think about what kind of work they would like to do in the future. (Use information from video and lesson.)
- Then have children fill out both sides of “Getting Ready for Higher Education” and “Timeline to Success” worksheet. When they are finished, have children share some of their information from their worksheet with the group.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING THE THINGS I NEED
TO DO TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT CAN I DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I am growing in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and people.</i>

Handout 1

COLLEGE PREPARATION

FRESHMEN YEAR

- Meet your counselor
- Lay out a four-year plan
- Connect every semester to review your grades and plan

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Stay motivated
- Go to college fairs and ask questions
- Take a practice ACT/SAT test

JUNIOR YEAR

- “Best grades ever” year
- Prepare and take ACT/SAT
- Visit at least one college campus

SENIOR YEAR

- Apply to schools at the start of the first semester
- Apply for financial aid
- Apply for scholarships

Once you have made your decision and done all of the steps of preparation, Pray for God’s will to be done. He will open the door of the college that is right for you.

Once that door opens...walk through it. The rest is up to you!

Proverbs 3:5-6 says,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.”

THINKING ABOUT MY FUTURE

- 1.** What are my hobbies and things I like to do?

- 2.** What are my favorite subjects in school?

- 3.** What subjects do I make good grades in?

- 4.** What job or career I think I might be good at?

GETTING READY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Take a moment to talk with your partner about what your plans are for the future.
Share the goals you will set for yourself to achieve by next school year.
Write them down. Answer the following questions.

What are three most important goals you hope to achieve by next school year?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Why are these goals most important?

What will you have to do to achieve these goals?

What support will you need from others to accomplish these goals?

TIMELINE TO SUCCESS

Below you are going to make your own timeline to success and explore what you need to do to get there. Let's start by having you understand how long you have to accomplish some of your goals.

- I will start middle school in year: _____
- I will start high school in year: _____
- I will apply for college in year: _____
- I will graduate from college in year: _____

Goals serve as a guide to help you travel the road to your future. Think about the things you will need to do to stay on track and reach your ultimate goal of success.

STARTING TODAY **ONE MONTH FROM NOW** **BY END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR** **BY NEXT SCHOOL YEAR**

Goals:

Goals:

Goals:

Goals:

Preparations for the Future

Dear Facilitator: This week we will get a little more practical as we begin to plan or prepare for the future. We will think more about the hopes and dreams that God puts within us and how we can make plans to accomplish our goals.

The scripture story for today's lesson is found in 1 Chronicles 28. David had hopes and dreams to build the temple, and God gave the work to his son Solomon. Does this mean that David's hopes and dreams were not important, or that he was wrong in his desires somehow? No, God works in ways that we can't always know or understand. God said that David was a man after His own heart, so obviously God loved him, valued him, and had a purpose for him. David was very instrumental in passing down detailed plans to build the temple and to encourage Solomon to follow God. We may not understand how God uses our hopes and dreams. He fulfills our hopes and dreams in ways that we could never imagine, and this affects others—particularly our children, our neighborhoods, our communities, and our world. Look at how David's family influenced the nation of Israel!

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain why families should plan and prepare for the future.
2. Identify what gives them strength and power to prepare for the future.
3. Uncover ways they can begin to prepare for the future.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: We plan and prepare for the future to bring honor and glory to God and to fulfill our calling and purpose as families.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about the importance of increasing in wisdom by becoming a lifelong learner. We focused on how to successfully prepare for college.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Sometimes we get overwhelmed by our hopes and dreams and just want to quit; however, many of you have had to persevere and work hard to accomplish your hopes and dreams.

In today's session, our teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain why families should plan and prepare for the future.
2. Identify what gives us strength and power to prepare for the future.
3. Uncover ways we can begin to prepare for the future.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: We plan and prepare for the future to bring honor and glory to God and to fulfill our calling and purpose as families.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

Today during our table talk time, we are going to discuss how hard work and planning has helped you be successful in your life.

1. What is the hardest job that you have ever done?
2. What helped you complete the job or reach your goal?
3. How do you feel once the job was complete and the goal was achieved?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging the World

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

How was your dinner discussion? What did you learn about some of the hardest jobs that others have done and how they did it? Did anyone talk about preparation or planning? I'm sure that most of you who have completed difficult tasks feel very good about your accomplishments and probably spent time planning and preparing how you would go about reaching your goals.

We've all heard the phrase, "Work smarter not harder!" That thought will contribute to our discussion tonight as we consider three questions:

1. Why we should plan and prepare?
2. What gives us strength and power to prepare?
3. How do we plan to accomplish our hopes and dreams?

In the appendix, look at the saying "One can choose..."

Discuss if the saying is true.

In the appendix, review the list of famous failures.

Discuss.

There was a man in the Bible, a man after God's own heart, whose dream was to complete a difficult task. That man was David, and his dream was to build the temple. We know, however, that David did not get to achieve this goal himself.

We also know that because David was a man who planned and prepared to fulfill his dreams through prayer, obedience, and trust in God's promises, his dream for the temple did still become a reality. In the end, it was God's plan that David's son, Solomon, would be the one to build the temple, but it's clear that David's diligent planning and preparation was key in bringing the plan together. If David had given up and thought his dream was a failure when he realized he would not be the one to see it through, the temple may never have been built.

We may have hopes and dreams and even plans, as David had, but God has a plan that is sometimes beyond our understanding. He wants us to trust Him and do our part to be used by Him in His plans. Listen to the story of David's plans in 1 Chronicles 28.

Read David's story (1 Chronicles 28)

There was a king in the Bible named David, and one day he called in all the important people of Jerusalem. He told them that he really wanted to build the temple, but God said no!

This was not to discourage David because he was a man after God's own heart, and God was very pleased that he was king. To show his favor of David, God chose his son, Solomon, who was obedient to God too. David strongly encouraged Solomon to keep being obedient so that all would go well for him.

David also encouraged Solomon to stay close to God because God sees every heart and knows every plan and thought we have. David told him that if you seek God, you will find Him. He told Solomon to take the job of building the temple seriously and to do a good job.

David had been very busy making plans and preparing drawings and other arrangements for the temple of God, and he gave them to Solomon so he could be successful. He told him not to worry or be afraid of failing because God wouldn't fail him or leave him. God was on his side.

DISCUSS

- What are some things that you notice about the way David responded and reacted?
- As a parent, what could you do to help your children realize their hopes and dreams?
- What kind of planning could you do to help those in your family be successful?
- What are some ways that we can persevere in the planning and preparation for our hopes and dreams, even in times when things are not going as we had planned?



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 4:5

Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them.

Proverbs 1:8

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Proverbs 23:12

Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.

We are to bring honor and glory to God in everything we do and fulfill the calling that He has given to us and our families. This includes hard work, determination, diligence, and living as God intended us to live.

DISCUSS

- What gives us strength and power to prepare for the future?
- What ways do prayer and God's Word help us as we prepare for the future?
- How can other people help us as we prepare for the future?

How do we begin to prepare for the future?

What are some of our hopes for the future (some might have already completed a "Hopes and Dreams" worksheet from the session, "Hope for the Future." If not, compile a list of hopes and dreams.

ACTIVITY

1. Prioritize and choose one hope or dream that you think is important for your family.
2. In small groups, talk together about how you might investigate or find out who else has done this or what other information might be available to help you plan.
3. When you are done, list three steps or goals to start your plan to make your dream a reality. You will probably want to repeat this step again after you complete these steps and possibly reprioritize your goal and update your investigation techniques as you learn. It's important to be diligent and determined. (Goals and Planning Worksheet)

As we close this evening, let's remember that planning and preparation is an important part of realizing your hopes and dreams.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.
Our objectives were to:

1. Explain why families should plan and prepare for the future.
2. Identify what gives us strength and power to prepare for the future.
3. Uncover ways we can begin to prepare for the future.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: We plan and prepare for the future to bring honor and glory to God and to fulfill our calling and purpose as families.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Isaiah 54:13

All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Goals and Planning Worksheet

Prioritized Dream

Investigation Ideas

- ---

- ---

- ---

Plan

- ---

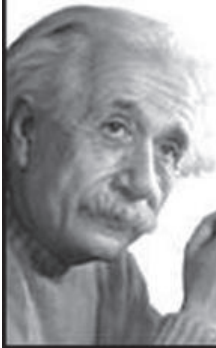
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*"One can choose to go back toward
safety or forward toward growth.
Growth must be chosen again and again;
fear must be overcome again and again."*

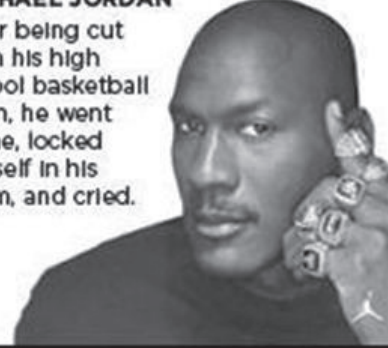
A. Maslow

FAMOUS FAILURES



ALBERT EINSTEIN

He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4-years-old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much"



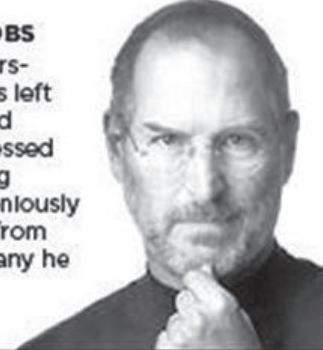
MICHAEL JORDAN

After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room, and cried.



WALT DISNEY

Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas."



STEVE JOBS

At 30-years-old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.



OPRAH WINFREY

Was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she "wasn't fit for television."



THE BEATLES

Rejected by Decca Recording Studios, who said "We don't like their sound—they have no future in show business."

**IF YOU'VE NEVER FAILED,
YOU'VE NEVER TRIED ANYTHING NEW**

The Iceberg Illusion

Success
is an
iceberg

WHAT PEOPLE
SEE

SUCCESS!

Persistence

Failure

Sacrifice

Disappointment

WHAT PEOPLE
DON'T SEE

Dedication

Hard work

Discipline

A diagram showing a battery connected to a light bulb. The circuit is closed, and the bulb is shown with light rays emanating from it, indicating it is lit.



Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging the World

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Objectives

- Help children be aware of why we need to prepare for the future.
- Help children be aware of the most important part of God's plan for their life.
- Help children be aware of what gives us strength and power to prepare for the future.
- Help children be aware of ways we can begin to prepare for the future.

Even before you were born, God had a plan for your life. In the Bible, in Jeremiah 1:5, He tells us, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart." God is telling you that He thought about you and decided He needed and wanted you to be in the earth for a very special reason. He has set you apart for a specific assignment. When God created you, He placed inside you a unique and special gift that only you can give to the world, and then He formed you in your mother's womb to be born.

The most important part of God's plan for your life is to make sure you grow up to be His representative—His disciple. Therefore,

God gave you Christian parents that would teach you to love and honor Him and His Son Jesus. God has given you to your parents as a gift, and He is partnering with them to carry out the plans He has for your life. Psalm 127:3 says, "Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him." It is your parents' responsibility to help you come to realize what your gifts are and why you were created. As you are growing up, your parents provide the care, instruction, experiences, and opportunities you need to practice and develop your gifts and abilities. Yes, God intends to use you to be a blessing to others and bring Him glory.

God is a planner and goal setter, and since we are created in God's image, it is natural for us to want to plan and set goals. When you are young, your parents set goals for you and make most of the plans for your life. They pray to God for direction and guidance as they make decisions that will impact your future.

Parents prepare for your future in so many ways. For instance, they select the school you attend, they choose what activities you participate in, they monitor the TV shows you watch and the music you listen to. Parents realize they have a command from God to raise you according to the instructions in the Bible. Proverbs 22:6 tells them, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." The most critical thing that parents do to make sure you have a successful future is guide you into accepting Jesus as your personal Savior. For you to develop a loving, committed relationship with Jesus is of utmost importance to them. Your parents know that it is essential to help prepare you for your eternal future as well. They do this through many ways like teaching you about God, praying with you, guiding you to make wise choices, and exposing you to Christian families and friends.

As you continue to grow and develop, God expects for you to play a bigger role in preparing for your future. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." And God wants you to mature and grow wiser and in favor just like Jesus did. Instead of your parents having to monitor you, God wants you to take ownership for making the right, godly choices for yourself. God wants you to take time to read your Bible and spend time praying. He wants you to choose wholesome TV shows, positive media experiences, and only listen to clean music. It is important to God that you choose friends who love and honor God, and that you attend church because you want to be there not just because your parents make you go. God smiles when He sees you put into action the lessons the Bible is teaching you because then you demonstrate to God that you

are becoming more committed to your relationship with Him.

As you prepare for your future, more than anything else, God wants you to accept His precious Son, Jesus, as your Savior. You will then have God's power, the Holy Spirit living inside of you to help you as you plan and make decisions about your life. John 14:26 says, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." And Philippians 4:9 says, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Just like God has plans for you as an individual, He also has plans for your family. God wants every family to have a mission and set goals to accomplish their mission. A mission is a special assignment that God has given to a family. It is their reason for existing. Joshua 24:15 says, "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." That should be the declaration of every Christian family. Parents are the leaders in a Christian family, and it is up to them to find out what God is calling them to do.

As you pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, you will find that there is a very special assignment God has planned for your family. As all of you learn more about God and Jesus, your family will grow in God's grace, knowledge, and favor and be able to make a positive contribution to our world. In John 17:4, Jesus says to God, His Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." Let that be your goal as an individual and as a family—to brightly reflect the glory of the LORD. That is true preparation for your future on earth and your future in eternity!

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DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about why we need to prepare for the future.
- Lead children in a discussion about what can help guide us in planning for the future.
- Lead children in a discussion of ways we can begin to prepare for the future.
- Lead children in a discussion about the most important decision they can make in planning for the future.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

Pencils, crayons, or markers

8x11 tag board (enough for each child to have one)

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/RUUp841pZrs>

“100 Kids Tell Us What They Want to Be When They Grow Up”

- After viewing the video, on a piece of 8x11 tag board, in large letters, have students write what they would like to be when they grow up. When all are completed, have students stand and hold their tag board to display their choice for their future job or career. Have them say, “When I grow up, I want to be a _____.”
- Then have them tell why they made that choice. Film each one, and then show the completed video to the group.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

“My Goals” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/jKxdrx3KuMQ>

“What’s Your Plan for the Future?”

- Discuss briefly.
- After viewing the video, have students work in pairs to fill out “My Goals Worksheet.” When students are finished, have them share with the group (from their worksheet) some of their goals and some of the things they will have to do to accomplish their goals. Below are two good additional videos to help students think about Preparation for the Future. If time permits you may want to include them in the activity.

<https://youtu.be/nJRd-yzC5GI>

“Where Am I Headed?”

<https://youtu.be/Zxlttbn4R7g>

“3 Steps to Knowing God’s Will for Your Life.”

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING WHAT I NEED TO DO
TO PREPARE FOR MY EARTHLY FUTURE
AS WELL AS MY ETERNAL FUTURE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT CAN I DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I know that God has
great plans for my life.*

GOALS WORKSHEET



Areas of My Life:	Goals to Write	What I Would Need to Learn or Find Out?	Actions to Take	Who Could Help Me?
<i>School and Study</i>				
<i>Relationships and Friends</i>				
<i>Leisure Activities and Hobbies</i>				
<i>Sports</i>				
<i>Health and Fitness</i>				

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Being Good Neighbors

Dear Facilitator: This week we will be discussing how we can become good neighbors and why God asks us to be good neighbors.

The story for tonight's lesson is found in Luke 10:25-37.

We often ask ourselves how we decide who are neighbors are and what we should do to show them love. Today we want to go a little deeper and discover that it's not about deciding who our neighbors are, but rather how we become the kind of neighbor that God wants us to be. As we learn to become good neighbors, we can bring peace to our communities and be an agent of change for good in our neighborhoods. Sometimes we are the ones who need the "neighboring," and it's important to let others show God's love to us; however, we always have something we can give others as well. Participants will come up with real-life stories to help them better understand what actions and sacrifices they can make to become good neighbors.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Identify their neighbors.
2. Explain how they can become good neighbors.
3. Explain why they should be good neighbors.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I will obey God's commands to be a good neighbor by having compassion for others and serving them.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

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Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about how to prepare for the future.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Do:** Activity

1. Instruct the group to sit in a circle.
2. Stand in the center of the circle and ask one person in the group: Do you love your neighbor?
3. The person you ask can give either of two possible responses: 1) "Yes" and then the youth on his/her right and left must switch seats OR 2) "No, but I love everyone who..." has brown hair, is wearing blue, has been water skiing, name starts with K, etc.
4. Everyone who meets the characteristic must get up and change seats to a new seat.
5. While people are changing seats, the person in the center of the circle tries to grab one of the empty chairs.
6. Whoever is left without a seat gets to repeat the process of asking someone in the circle: Do you love your neighbor?

Optional Debrief



Ask:

- What types of people do you find easy to love? Difficult to love?
- What are some ways that people show their love toward others?

Conclusion

The Scripture tells us that others will know we are Christians by our love. We are told to love not only those people we can get along with but to also love our enemies.

In today's session, our teaching objectives are to:

1. Identify your neighbors.
2. Explain how you can become a good neighbor.
3. Explain why you should be a good neighbor.

This week's commitment statement is: I will obey God's commands to be a good neighbor by having compassion for others and serving them.



Say: Today we are going to talk about being good neighbors. In the Bible, a lawyer who knew the Scripture and law of Israel once asked Jesus a question: "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded with a story:

Luke 10:29-37:

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man

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was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

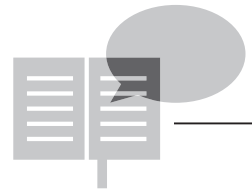
Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table.

1. In the story, what did the Good Samaritan do?
2. What are some ways that people have been good neighbors to you?
3. What are some ways that you have been a good neighbor to others?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Scripture SUPPORT

John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Exodus 22:26

If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset.

Leviticus 19:16

Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the LORD.

Leviticus 25:14

If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other.

Deuteronomy 5:20

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Matthew 19:19

Honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself.

Mark 12:33

To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Romans 13:8

*[Love Fulfills God’s Requirements]
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*

Romans 13:9

The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,”] and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging The World

BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS

How was your discussion? Today our hope is that we will understand the story of the Good Samaritan a little better, and consider not only who is our neighbor, as the lawyer asked, but also what kind of a neighbors we are.

Notice that the lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” What he really wanted to know is, “Who am I responsible for and what is required to meet the expectations?” Like many of us, the lawyer was trying to justify caring for neighbors who were just like him. Jesus responded by telling a story that redefined the question, “Who is my neighbor?” (Not in terms of who is close to us but in terms of who was in need.) The real question is not, “Who is my neighbor?” It is, “Who is in need and how can I be a neighbor to them?” Sometimes we are the ones in need, and we need others to be a good neighbor to us, too.

DISCUSS

- Does anyone have an example of a time when they needed help and others they didn’t expect to help were right there to offer care and support?
- What surprised you about that help?

Jesus ends the parable of the Good Samaritan by asking the lawyer a different question: “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Instead of passively deciding who is or who isn’t our neighbor, Jesus is teaching us that being a neighbor involves action, not passivity.

Being neighborly and serving others will cost us something and require us to take risks.

DISCUSS

- What costs and risks are there with being neighborly?

Being neighborly involves bringing peace to our neighbors and being agents of redemption to restore our neighborhoods and communities to God's original intent. Since the fall or when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, Satan has worked to take over and destroy our families, neighborhoods, and communities. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can be an influence and force for good in this redemptive work in our neighborhoods. Jesus calls us to be the kind of neighbor who owns the responsibility to bring peace and restoration to our communities. We can no longer say that this is someone else's responsibility. As we work to restore our communities, we will also have opportunities to share the gospel and love of Christ with our neighbors. This is what Jesus is asking us to do.

Have participants get into groups of two to four and make up a "Good Samaritan" story from their own neighborhoods and experiences. After they discuss their story in a few minutes, ask for one to two volunteers to share.

1. Where would your story take place and what would it be about?
2. Who would be the characters in your story?
The priest, Levite, Good Samaritan, wounded man?
3. What needs are there and how will they be met in this story?

Sometimes, when we see someone in need, we hesitate to help because we are afraid that we won't be able to help that person, that our words may not mean much, or that we don't have much to offer.

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DISCUSS

As we think about your examples and stories, how could we be good neighbors?

- What needs do you see right around you?
- What does a good neighbor look like?
A bad neighbor?
- What do you have to offer to help others?
- What actions and sacrifices could you make to be a neighbor to others?
- What could you commit to do in the next month to be a good neighbor?

As we close this evening, we invite you to think about what kind of neighbor you want to be and why. You may be the one who needs the compassion and care right now, but even as God wants to meet our needs through others, He invites us to look around and care for others who are also in need.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

You should be able to:

1. Identify your neighbors.
2. Explain how you can become a good neighbor.
3. Explain why you should be a good neighbor.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging The World

BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about being a good neighbor.
- Help children identify their neighbors.
- Help children be aware of why they should be good neighbors.
- Help children be aware of how they can be good neighbors.

In the Bible, Jesus makes it clear to us that we are to love our neighbors. Luke 10:25-37 tells us this story to prove the point:

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'^[a]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[b]"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put

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the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denari^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

³⁷ *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Loving your neighbor was so important to Jesus that He said it was the second most important commandment. In Mark 12:29-31, He says, "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." In Romans 15:2, we are instructed, "Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up." Jesus tells us that a good neighbor is concerned about the well-being of others and are there to encourage them and lift them up when times get tough. Good neighbors are also willing to share their resources when needed.

A good neighbor shows respect, compassion, mercy, and the love of God toward their fellow man. In Galatians 6:2, it says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." It is true that we are our brother's keeper! God intends for us to look out for one another. In James 2:15-17, Jesus says to us, "Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?"

For a child, being a good neighbor can be much simpler than that. A friendly hello and a smile can help a person feel good. So, keep a pocket full of smiles handy, and be ready to give them out generously. You can be a good neighbor by showing respect for your neighbor's yard or property. Your neighbor will also appreciate it if you keep your noise level down. You could help your neighbor carry in their groceries, shovel their walkway, or pick up any litter in their yard. We are Jesus's eyes, ears, voice, hands, and feet.

What matters most to God is that we love Him and prove we are His children by the love that we show to others on His behalf. In John 15:12, Jesus says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." There is a quote that says, "The happiest people I know are people who don't even think about being happy. They just think about being good neighbors, good people. And then happiness sort of sneaks in the back window while they are busy doing good." Let that be you!

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible says about the importance of being a good neighbor.
- Lead children in a discussion about who their neighbors are.
- Lead children in a discussion about what it means to be a good neighbor.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

“Random Acts of Kindness Calendar” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/nMW_ZygBGhE

“Excelsior Primary School students share
Random Acts of Kindness”

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- After viewing the video, discuss briefly what the Bible says about loving your neighbor. (Use information from video and lesson.) Then tell the children that random acts of kindness are a way that they can bless their neighbors (friends, neighbors, parents, siblings, teachers, or anyone who is in their life.) Let children know that a random act of kindness doesn’t have to cost anything. It can be as simple as smiling at someone or writing them a kind note.
- Next, have the children work in a group to come up with some simple, random acts of kindness they can do. List them on the easel or white board.
- Finally, have the children write one act of kindness that they will do for someone each day on their “Random Acts of Kindness Calendar.” For instance, they may write on one Monday square, “Compliment my friend.” On a Tuesday square, “Pick up trash on the playground” or “Write a thank you note to my teacher or friend.” They can do the same act repeatedly or a variety of acts. Whatever they write, they should do what they say they are going to do. You can check back on a later date to see how they are doing with loving their neighbor through random acts of kindness.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

"Ways to Love My Neighbor" worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/jMLF5BDXJOk>

"Love Your Neighbor as Yourself"

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- After viewing video, discuss briefly what the Bible says about loving your neighbor. (Use information from video and lesson.)
- Next, have children work in pairs to come up with acts of kindness that they can do to show the love of God to their neighbor (friend, parent, sibling, neighbor, teacher, or anyone else). Have them write their answers on their "Ways to Love My Neighbor" worksheet. Then have the pairs share their ideas with the group.



Scripture SUPPORT

Luke 10:25-37

The story about the Good Samaritan teaches us about what it means to be a good neighbor.

Mark 12:30

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

Mark 12:31

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Romans 15:2

Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

James 2:15-17

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I LOVE MY NEIGHBOR AS I LOVE MYSELF?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I practice random acts of kindness to show the love of God to my neighbors.</i>

5 WAYS TO LOVE MY NEIGHBOR

I WILL:

1. _____











2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						
						
						

Communication

Dear Facilitator: This session is about communication. We will discuss the difference between what we mean to say, what we really say, and how the message is interpreted by the receiver. Sometimes what the speaker intends to say does not match with what the receiver interprets.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.


This lesson focuses on the message of Proverbs 15:28, which talks about the importance of thinking carefully before we speak.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to communicating clearly and effectively to build family relationships that are strong and healthy.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** In previous lessons, we have talked about family identity, our roles as parents and children, and how important it is building our family team.

We will continue to explore how God's idea of family is built on a foundation of faith.

As we cover our families in prayer and believe what God says in the Bible, we are building a Christian home.

We all have the responsibility to consider our actions and take responsibility and ownership for those actions.

Discuss: As you think about what we have discussed and learned about your family's identity and roles in previous lessons, write down a couple of things that have helped you in your family. Would anyone be willing to share?


This lesson focuses on communication and the message of Proverbs 15:28, which talks about the importance of thinking carefully before we speak.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to communicating clearly and effectively to build family relationships that are strong and healthy.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Tonight, we are going to talk about communication. We will discuss the difference between what we mean to say, what we really say, and how the message is interpreted by the receiver. Sometimes what the speaker intends to say does not match with what the receiver interprets..

During dinner, we are going to play a game that many of you may have played before.



Share: Before we do, I want to share a story with you about communication in my family.

(Share a story of a time when what you said was misunderstood and resulted in a mess.)

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

At your tables we are going to play a game called “Telephone.”

One person begins by whispering a phrase to the person on his or her left. That person whispers the message to the next person and so on. The last person to receive the message announces it to the group.

1. How much or how little did the communication change?
2. Why do you think that happened?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging The World

COMMUNICATION

The Bible says in Proverbs 15:28, “The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.”

To “weigh” our answers, meaning to think carefully about how we speak, we are going to study a diagram to better understand how communication works.

When thinking about communication, keep the following in mind:

1. Are you saying what you mean to say?
2. How are you saying it?
3. How is it being heard?

There are many things that can get in the way of communicating clearly. Our tone, body language, and emotions can get in the way of the message.

It is my responsibility to “own” or be responsible for my communication and the impact it has on others.

Our family commitment statement tonight is: I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully to build healthy and strong family relationships.

Wouldn’t it be great if everything we said or thought was perfectly understood by others in our family?

Wouldn’t it be great if everything we ever said or thought was perfectly understood by others in our family?

Let’s look at the Family Communication handout and talk about what it means.

The channel is the way we send the message to the person or receiver. The channel can be anything from a text, email, letter, talking in person, or talking on the phone.

Within the channel and the communication system there is “noise” which affects how the receiver decodes or interprets that message. Noise can be feelings, activities that are taking place around us, or other things that distract the sender and receiver.

When the message is decoded or interpreted by the receiver, there is usually a response which goes back through the channel. The response is received by the original sender and decoded through all the noise.

It's easier to understand than you may think.

Tonight, we are going to learn a few techniques to help us become better senders and receivers. Before we do, let's talk about a couple of things and get your thoughts.

DISCUSS

- How can emotions be noise in the system?
- What are different channels or means to communicate?
- How do you select what is best for the situation?

The goal of communication is not to win or lose. The goal of good communication is to understand and connect better with one another.

Good communication helps us hear the meaning behind the words that are spoken. As a sender of a message, it's important learn to do the following:

1. **Say what you mean.**

Example: Instead of coming home and saying, “This house is always a mess,” say what you mean such as, “Sam, it makes me upset that when I come home the house is messy. Will you please pick up the toys on the floor before you go to bed?”

2. Watch your body language and tone.

Example: Your nonverbal communication (body movements) and tone of voice (loudness/softness, harshness/gentleness) should agree with the message.

3. Express emotion appropriately.

Example: Think about how the receiver will receive a message. If you are angry, it won't work to say, "I'm not angry." However, it may also not work to scream, "I'm angry!"

The best communication is when your words, body language, tone, and emotions all agree.

If we are the receiver of a message, it is helpful to make sure we understand and hear what the sender is communicating. Here are a few things we can do:

1. Stop.

Example: Give full attention to the sender—get off your cell phone!

2. Listen.

Example: Give eye contact, and really try to listen to the words that are being said.

3. Ask.

Example: Ask questions to clarify, and make sure to understand what the sender is saying. "Are you saying that you need me to help take care of the house? Are you tired when you come home?"

The best response is to stop, listen, and ask questions before we respond with our opinions and feelings.

Ask the audience to share examples of a time when they communicated something and their body language, tone, or emotions didn't agree with what they said. Or share a time when they neglected to stop, listen, and ask.

It's important to learn to say, "I was wrong" or "I am sorry" when you say the wrong things in the wrong way. Some of us speak our minds and should listen first and put more thought into our communication.

Other people feel that what they have to say doesn't matter or isn't important, but they should speak up more quickly about their thoughts and feelings.

All of us should remember to be willing to adjust our expectations appropriately and even laugh together about things that may not be as important as we originally thought they were.

Let's watch this skit and see what happens.

ACTIVITY

Thirty-Second Skit

1. Start with a 30-second skit with a family arguing, fussing, and not communicating well.

Scenario: Mom and Dad had a tough day at work and come home to no dinner or a messy house with kids creating "noise" in the system.
2. Give prepared labels (Dad, Mom, Son, and Daughter) to volunteers and ask them to wear the labels and pretend to be that person in the skit.
3. Instruct the audience before the skit participants come out to think of ways to improve this communication based on what we are learning.

After 30 seconds of acting, ask the actors to freeze in place.

Communication conflicts are not bad, but the way people talk to each other can be hurtful or helpful.

People are not born knowing how to solve conflicts in a positive way; they must learn and practice good communication skills.

Like most new skills, it is awkward at first, but good communication skills help families develop good leadership.



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalm 19:14

*May the words of my mouth
and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD,
my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Proverbs 13:3

*Those who guard their lips
preserve their lives, but those
who speak rashly will come
to ruin.*

Matthew 12:34

*...For the mouth speaks what
the heart is full of.*

Ephesians 4:29

*Do not let any unwholesome talk
come out of your mouths, but
only what is helpful for building
others up according to their
needs, that it may benefit those
who listen.*

1 Peter 3:8

*Finally, all of you, be like-minded,
be sympathetic, love one
another, be compassionate
and humble.*

Notes

Let's repeat our family commitment statement:
I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully in order to build healthy and strong family relationships.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16	40 minutes
<h1>Student Training</h1>	
<i>Engaging The World</i>	COMMUNICATION

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance communication plays in our lives.
- Help children to be aware of appropriate use of communication.
- Help children to be aware of what the Bible says about communication.
- Help children to be aware of the power of the words they speak.
- Help children to be aware that facial expressions and body language are part of communication.
- Help children to be aware of the way they are using their words.

Today we're going to talk about what the Bible says about communication. Communication is sharing thoughts, ideas, feelings, or information. Good communication is very important to all people. Of all the creatures God created, He only gave humans the ability to communicate using words. The ability to use words to communicate is a powerful gift from God. In the Bible, God also gave us lessons about how we are to use this special gift. As Christians we should use this gift to be a blessing to everyone that we meet.

The main way we communicate is with our words and with our actions. The first place we learn to communicate is within our family. When you were just a baby, you learned very quickly to communicate by crying or screaming to let your parents know you were unhappy or uncomfortable.

This let them know that you were hungry, you needed to have your diaper changed, or you just wanted to snuggle and be held. When you were happy or satisfied you let them know by smiling or just being calm or maybe making sweet gurgling baby noises.

Notes

This manner of communicating was okay when you were a tiny baby, but because parents knew you needed to use the appropriate way to express your thoughts, ideas, and feelings, they soon began to teach you basic words. They taught you how to use words to ask for what you needed or wanted and how to get their attention when you were unhappy or uncomfortable without crying or screaming. Your parents also helped you learn how to use words when you wanted to let them know when you were happy, tell them about something you were learning, or ask them questions about a new experience.

Your parents were the first to use words to teach you and encourage you. As they taught you, they showed their patience and love for you while using their words. They were teaching you that positive communication helps to nurture and lift others up. It is important that we do the same for family members and others. We can start by listening carefully to one another when sharing thoughts and feelings. Then you will have a better understanding of one another as you work together.

Another important part of communication that we must remember is using our words to express good manners. “Please” and “thank you” can take you far in life. Also, it is important to apologize when we have hurt or disappointed someone. Often, a sincere “I’m sorry” is all it takes to heal the situation (1 Peter 3:8).

Along with using our words to communicate, we also use our facial expressions and body language—the way your face looks when you are talking or the way your body is either relaxed, excitable, or tense. Your words and the look in your eyes and on your face also communicate what you are trying to say.

God wants us to lead healthy, enjoyable, and peaceful lives. In the Bible, He tells us about the importance of our words, whether we live a life filled with goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.

Proverbs 13:3 says, “Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.”

The Bible tells us that our words are so powerful that they have the ability to make things better or worse. The words that come from our mouth show what is truly in our hearts (Matthew 12:34). Our words have the power to encourage others or put them down. It is important that we ask ourselves how we are using our words when we are communicating with others. Are the words that come out of your mouth filled with love or hatred, meanness or kindness, encouragement or discouragement? God holds each one of us accountable for the words that come out of our mouth.

Psalm 19:14 says, “May the words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

I believe that it would be wise for all of us to pray this scripture often. In praying this, we are asking God to help our hearts and thoughts be filled with things that are pleasing to Him, so that the words that come out of our mouths would make Him happy and proud of us.

Good communication between people is very important in our world today. That is why the Bible has a lot to say about how we use our words. God’s Word is very clear to instruct us on how we are to speak to and treat one another. One way we can be careful about the words we speak is to simply think before we speak. We can ask ourselves the following questions: Am I saying what I mean to say? Do I choose my words accurately to state the message I am speaking, or do I add harsh words?

Do my words match my body language and facial expressions? (Am I saying I am not angry, but my face is frowning, and my eyes are glaring?) How does my voice sound? (Is it calm and settled or agitated and angry?) Finally, how is my message being heard? (Does it feel like it is seeking to make the situation better or worse?) It is important to

Notes

Notes

say exactly what you mean, to watch your facial expressions and body language, and to keep your voice level calm.

Another way we can improve our communication skills is to remember to say to others only what we would want them to say to us and in the way we would want someone to say it to us. When it is our time to receive a message, we need to stop what we are doing, give the person our attention and eye contact, and listen carefully. We should not be thinking about what we are going to say back. Then ask any questions necessary to help you understand the message they are giving you.

Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” As Christians, God has given us the command to use our words to make the world better by speaking to teach and solve problems, to bless and encourage others, to create and express ideas, to share positive uplifting information, and to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible tells us about the power of our words.
- Lead children in a discussion about how facial expressions and body language play an important part in communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about how our words can either help us live a life of goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.
- Lead children in a discussion about how the Bible tells us we are to speak to one another.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/3RjRZ9jMfs0>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Tell the children that they are about to play a game called “Telephone.” Have the children get in a circle. Tell the children that you are going to whisper a message into someone’s ear. Then, that person will whisper in the ear of the person next to them to deliver the message, and that person will do the same, and so on and so forth. The hope for the game is that the message the instructor sent out through the circle is the same when it gets back to the instructor.

DISCUSS

This game reflects how listening carefully is an important part of communication.

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AGES 12-16

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/WER63AY8zB8>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

The instructor should explain to the children that they will have to form a team based on the instructions that you shout out. For example, some instructions could include, “Get into a team with people who watch some of the same TV programs as you or have on the same shoe brand as you,” or “Get into a team with people who like similar types of music.”

This will cause children to have to walk around and ask questions and communicate with peers.

DISCUSS

- Talk with the children about how this activity encouraged them to communicate.
- How could they learn to open and communicate more effectively in situations in the future?




CHALLENGE QUESTION

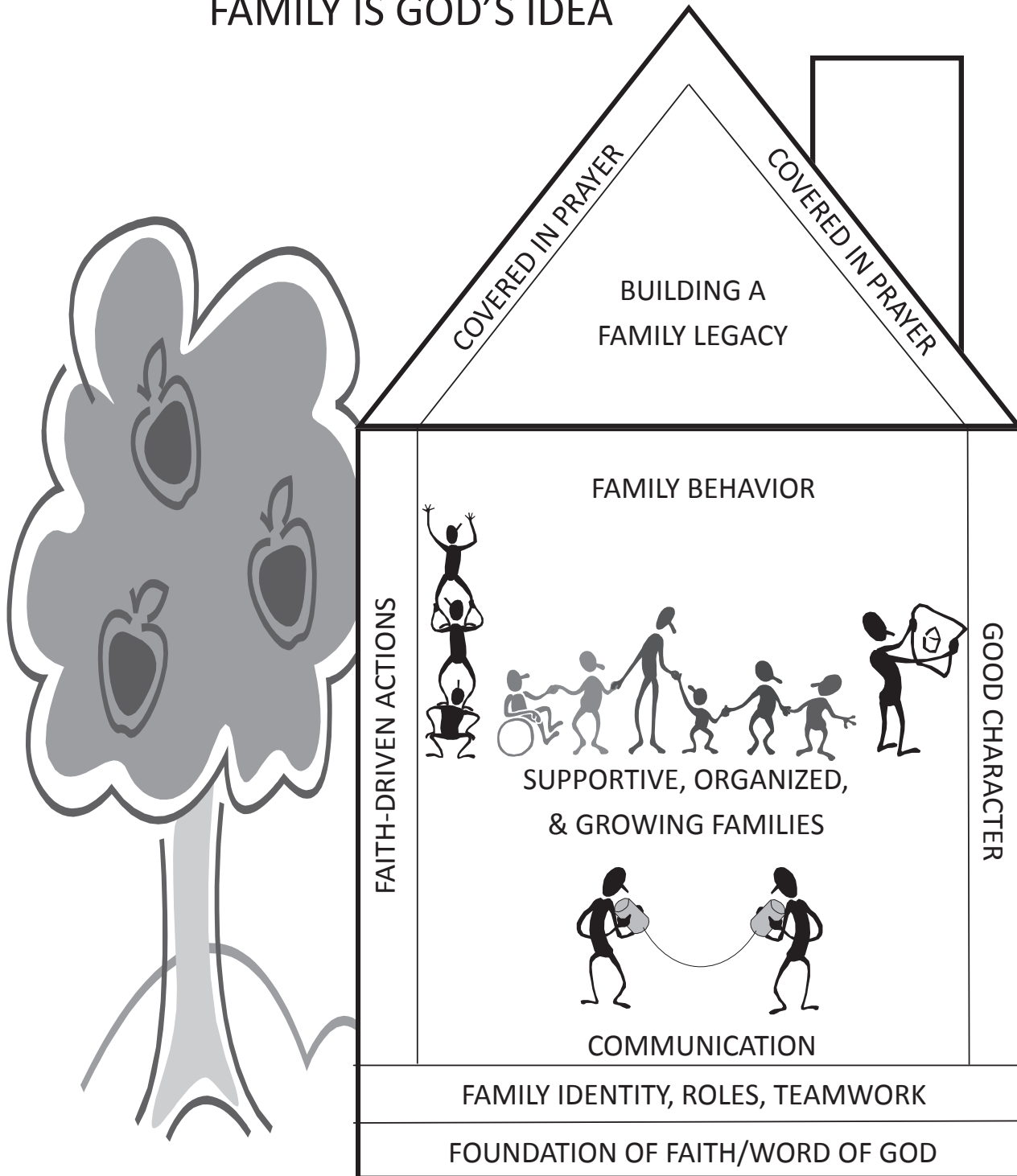
AM I USING MY WORDS TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS
AND LIFT THEM UP?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I use my words to be a blessing to others!</i>

FAMILY IS GOD'S IDEA



Building Strong Friendships

Dear Facilitator: This week we will be discussing how important it is for families to build strong friendships. The friendships in our lives should be on many different levels (see diagram at the end of the lesson). There are some types of friendships that will be on a mere acquaintance level, and others will involve the sharing of activities and responsibilities. Then, there are those friendships that allow us to share more of our emotions and innermost feelings and have close, open, and honest relationships.

Encourage participants to ask the LORD to fill them with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so they can know what level of friendship to have with each person they meet. Our Christian faith is built on relationships. This means that our relationships in life are of great importance to God, and it is important that we choose and develop them wisely.

When we look at the Trinity, we see all three persons in the Godhead as interdependent and submissive to one another. God is Himself a community of three divine persons living together and loving one another within the unity of the Godhead. By ourselves, we cannot imitate Christ, but because God created male and female and intended for us to be in relationship, we can imitate the mutual give-and-take relationship that we see in the Godhead between the Father, Son, and Spirit. This helps us understand why we should build friendships. It's because we can reflect Christ in our relationships through giving to others.

continued

Notes

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Explain why they should build friendships and relationships with others.
2. Define what it means to be a good friend.
3. Uncover ways to make friends for our family.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: We commit to building friendships because we reflect Christ in our relationships and contribute to the lives of others.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week we spent time talking about communication.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** “Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down!”
—Oprah Winfrey

Friends are very important in our lives and especially friends of our families.


In today’s session, our teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain why we should build friendships and relationships with others.
2. Define what it means to be a good friend.
3. Uncover ways to make friends for our family.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: We commit to building friendships because we reflect Christ in our relationships and contribute to the lives of others.

Today during our table talk time, we want to talk about the different types of friends we have. Friendships are important to God, and He has created us to be in relationship with Him and with others. It’s important to consider our friendships and how they affect us and help us in our families. As you sit at the dinner table this evening, take time to talk about the different types of friends that you have in your lives as well as what makes a good friend.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table:

1. What are some of the different types of friends we have?
2. What is a good friend like?
3. Who are some of the friends of your family?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Engaging The World

**BUILDING STRONG
FRIENDSHIPS**

How was your discussion? What did you learn about how your family views friendships? Friends bring life to us, and today we want to look at why we should build friendships, as well as what makes a good friend. As we consider friendship tonight, we also want to talk about how we make friends, especially making friendships with other families. There are many different levels of friends, and one is not necessarily better than the other. We need all levels of friendships in our lives. In addition to bringing added comfort and joy into our households, friendships of all levels with other families give us opportunities to contribute to others what God has given to us.

When we look at the Trinity, we see all three persons in the Godhead as interdependent and submissive to one another. God is Himself a community of three divine persons living together and loving one another within the unity of the Godhead. By ourselves, we cannot imitate Christ, but because God created male and female and intended for us to be in relationship, we can imitate the mutual give-and-take relationship that we see in the Godhead between the Father, Son, and Spirit. This helps us understand why we should build

friendships. It's because we can reflect Christ in our relationships through giving to others.

Remember David who planned and prepared to build the temple in the Bible? When David was young, he had an amazing best friend by the name of Jonathan. In fact, they had so much in common that they thought alike and watched out for each other all the time. Jonathan even gave David some of his valued possessions. Jonathan spoke well of David to his father even though his father, Saul, didn't like him. He built up David and gave examples of the good work that David

had done in defending Saul and Israel against the Philistines. Jonathan asked Saul to promise that David wouldn't be put to death. These two friends made a promise to love and care for each other as well as their families even beyond their death. Jonathan had a love for David that only best friends can share and understand! This story is found in 1 Samuel 18-20.

DISCUSS

- How can you reflect Christ in your friendships with others?
- What are some characteristics of good friends?
- What are some characteristics of someone who is not a good friend?
- What do you feel is important about making friendships with other families?
- How would you suggest that people make friendships with other families?
- What benefits are there for you and others in having friends of your family?
- How can you be intentional in your friendship building, and do you think it will make a difference?

As you discuss, make two lists on the board—one with characteristics of good friends and the other with characteristics of those who aren't good friends.

Ideas, if needed:

Good Friends

Shares joys and hard times
Speaks well of you
Loves and sticks beside you
Trustworthy
Wise
Encourages

Not A Friend

Selfish
Gossips
Is in it for themselves
Flatterer
Foolish
Puts you or others down

God does not allow anyone to be a lone ranger! We first need Christ and then the fellowship of other believers and friends. The whole Christian faith is built on relationships which imply that all levels of friendships are of great importance to God and to us.



Scripture SUPPORT

1 Samuel 18-20

Chapter 18:

Saul's Growing Fear of David

Chapter 19:

Saul Tries to Kill David

Chapter 20:

David and Jonathan

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Proverbs 18:24

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 24:26

*An honest answer is like
a kiss on the lips.*

Proverbs 27:9

*Perfume and incense bring
joy to the heart, and the
pleasantness of a friend springs
from their heartfelt advice.*

Matthew 7:4

*How can you say to your brother,
'Let me take the speck out of
your eye,' when all the time there
is a plank in your own eye?*

Luke 16:9

*I tell you, use worldly wealth to
gain friends for yourselves, so
that when it is gone, you will be
welcomed into eternal dwellings.*

James 2:23

*And the scripture was fulfilled
that says, "Abraham believed
God, and it was credited to him
as righteousness," and he was
called God's friend.*

Choose your friends wisely and consider having family friends at all levels!

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson. Our teaching objectives were to:

1. Explain why we should build friendships and relationships with others.
2. Define what it means to be a good friend.
3. Uncover ways to make friends for our family.

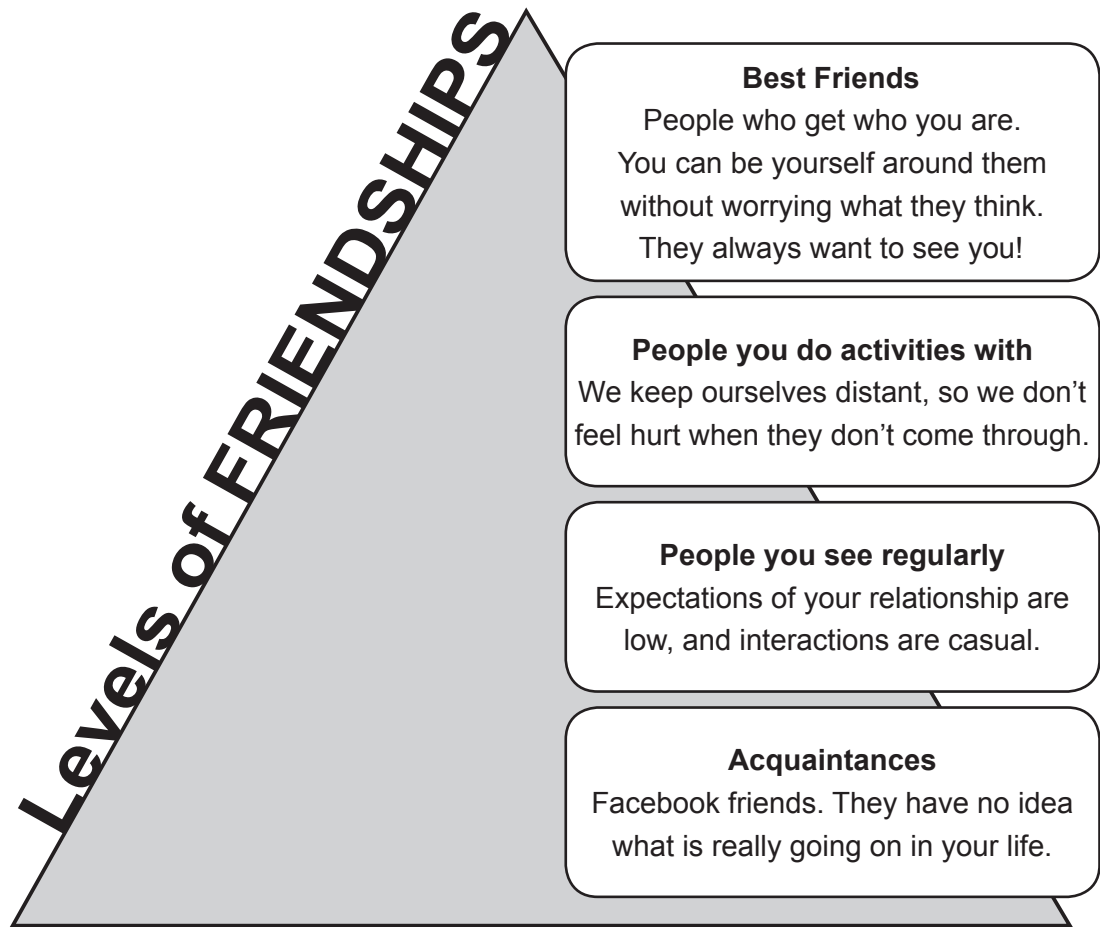
This week's commitment statement is: We commit to building friendships because we reflect Christ in our relationships and contribute to the lives of others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Building Strong Friendships

Friendships at all levels give us the opportunity to reflect Christ and positively influence our families, neighbors, and community.



Best Friends

David and Jonathan type of friendships -
friends who are as close as family and we know them well.

People you do activities with

Coworkers, neighbors, or others you know - *this friendship is valued because of the opportunity to encourage and influence.*

People you see regularly

People we might see once or twice a month and share common interests and activities - *this friendship is valued because of what we learn together.*

Acquaintances

Important to have acquaintances to meet people and learn new things –
good for networking and connecting with people.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Engaging The World

**BUILDING STRONG
FRIENDSHIPS**

Objectives

- Help children understand why they should build friendships and relationships with others.
- Help children be aware of what makes a godly friend.
- Help children be aware of how to be a godly friend.
- Help children be aware of how to make friends.

Have you ever heard the saying, “No man is an island?” That is a quote by John Donne, an English poet. It means, human beings do not thrive when isolated from others. No one is self-sufficient; everyone relies on others. None of us can accomplish much left to ourselves. We need other people to be complete—we need relationships.

When God created us, He created us to desire relationships with other humans. We want to get to know others and have them get to know us. The Bible tells us that two are better off than one because they can accomplish more together. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 tells us that if one falls, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it’s just too bad, because there is no one to help him. If it is cold, two

can snuggle together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself? Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break. Through these examples, God says that we were not created to be alone.

There is a reason that we are wired this way. The reason is we are made in the image of God, and God loves relationships. And because we are made in God’s likeness, we are drawn to relationships too. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us that God created us so that He can be in a relationship with us. He told us that He loves us, we are His children, and He wants to be a father to us. God tells us to love one another as He has loved us. In

this same verse, He goes on to call us His friends. In John 15:12-15, He correlates love with being our Father and our friend. God wants us to have friends here on earth, but more than that, He wants us to be friends with Him.

The Bible also lets us know that there are many benefits to building strong friendships. Here are some of the blessings involved when we establish friendships. Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” People learn from one another, just as “iron sharpens iron.” Friends encourage and help one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Friends open their home to one another (1 Peter 4:9). Friends love earnestly (1 Peter 4:8). Friends are determined to do good for their friends and are concerned for their welfare (Hebrews 10:24). With blessings like that, no wonder God wants us to be a good friend and have good friends in our lives. Friendships make our lives better.

So how do we find these wonderful friends to enhance our lives? It has been said that if you want to attract good friends, you must be friendly and reach out to others. Remember, Matthew 7:12 instructs us, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” So, the first thing you can do to attract friends is to treat people with kindness. Reaching out might make you feel a little anxious, but sometimes all it may take is saying, “Hi!” Just a smile can be enough to let a person see that you are a friendly person.

Every friendship begins when two people give each other an indication that they are interested in becoming friends. People who make friends easily are those who show an interest in others and activities they are involved in. When you ask questions and show interest in others, you make them feel appreciated and welcome. Some children feel comfortable simply asking, “Do you want to be friends?” Another way to show that you are friendly is by compliments. Find something that you like about the other person and tell them about it. You

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can say something like, “I like the picture you drew” or “I like your shoes.” Compliments make people feel good and cause them to respond in a friendly manner. Demonstrating kindness is another way to let a person know you would like to have them as a friend. You could loan them a pencil or share one of the cookies your mother packed in your lunch. However, be careful not to try and buy a person’s friendship. It never works and can hurt a chance for a true, positive friendship to develop.

One of the best ways to scope out potential friends is through sharing fun together. Your involvement in sports, band, church, and any other positive activity will be a great place to find friends. Laughing and playing outdoor games in your neighborhood, working on projects in the classroom, shooting baskets on the playground, or praising God and worshiping together in church youth group can help you get to know people better and lead to invitations for friendship. And don’t forget to keep your eyes open for God’s other children who may be feeling lonely and friendless. You are God’s agent in the earth. He wants you to let your light shine by reaching out to them. They just might be a treasure of a friend that the LORD has set apart for you.

As Christian young people, there is another element to establishing and building strong friendships that must be considered. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says to you, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Included in that plan are godly friends that God has destined to be a part of your life journey. A godly friend is a rare treasure and a gift from God because they are your brother or sister in Christ Jesus as well as a friend. It is important that you recognize godly friends when God sends them your way. Here are some extra special characteristics that you will find in a godly friend:

1. They love the LORD and share your faith in Jesus.

2. They have the Holy Spirit in them helping them give godly advice and wise counsel (Proverbs 12:26) (Proverbs 27:9).
3. They are faithful and loyal and love you unconditionally through difficult times (Proverbs 17:17).
4. They have integrity and a pure heart (Proverbs 22:11).
5. They are sincere and speak the truth in love, even when it hurts (Proverbs 27:5-6).
6. They strengthen, encourage, and help you (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
7. They forgive (Colossians 3:12-13).

As you spend time praying, learning more and more about God, and getting closer to Him, you will become godlier. Then the Holy Spirit will help you recognize the godly friends that the LORD has given to you as special gifts. And when those friends come into your life, you will be ready to value them, appreciate them, love them, and go out of your way to nurture that friendship and keep it strong! There is a song titled, “No Man Is an Island. The words to this song tells us that we need each other; we need friends.

No Man Is an Island

No man is an island, no man stands alone.

Each man’s joy is joy to me, each man’s grief is my own.

We need one another, so I will defend

Each man as my brother, each man as my friend.

By Joan Whitney and Alex Kramer



Scripture **SUPPORT**

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.

Ecclesiastes 4:10

If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Ecclesiastes 4:11

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Ecclesiastes 4:12

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

John 15:12-14

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

Notes

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about why the Bible says we should build friendships and relationships with others.
- Lead children in a discussion about the benefits of building strong friendships.
- Lead children in a discussion about what characteristics make a good friend.
- Lead children in a discussion about the special characteristics of a godly friend.
- Lead children in a discussion about ways to make friends.
- Lead children in a discussion about places they may find potential friends.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Technology to show video

“Friendship Soup” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/H7w7yXkJTu>

“Friendship Soup Recipe”

- After the video, discuss briefly what makes a good friend. (Use information from video and lesson.)
- Write some words on the easel or white board to get them started. Then have children write words on the Soup Pot diagram that are good ingredients of “Friendship Soup.” For instance, words like: Fun, caring, cheer you up, share your secrets, etc.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Technology to show video

Letter to friend worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or white board for group discussion (optional)

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/J5IRfU2CDsk>

“What’s a Real Friend”

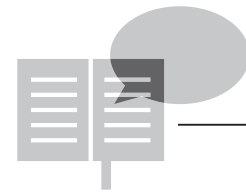
and YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/g5sL8f-aucM>

“No Man is an Island”

- After the video, discuss briefly the importance of having good friends. (Use information from video and lesson.)
- Then have children write a letter to their best friend using the letter worksheet.

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

John 15:15

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Peter 4:9

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Matthew 7:12

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 27:9

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Proverbs 22:11

One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.

Proverbs 27:5-6

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the LORD forgave you.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I A GOOD FRIEND?

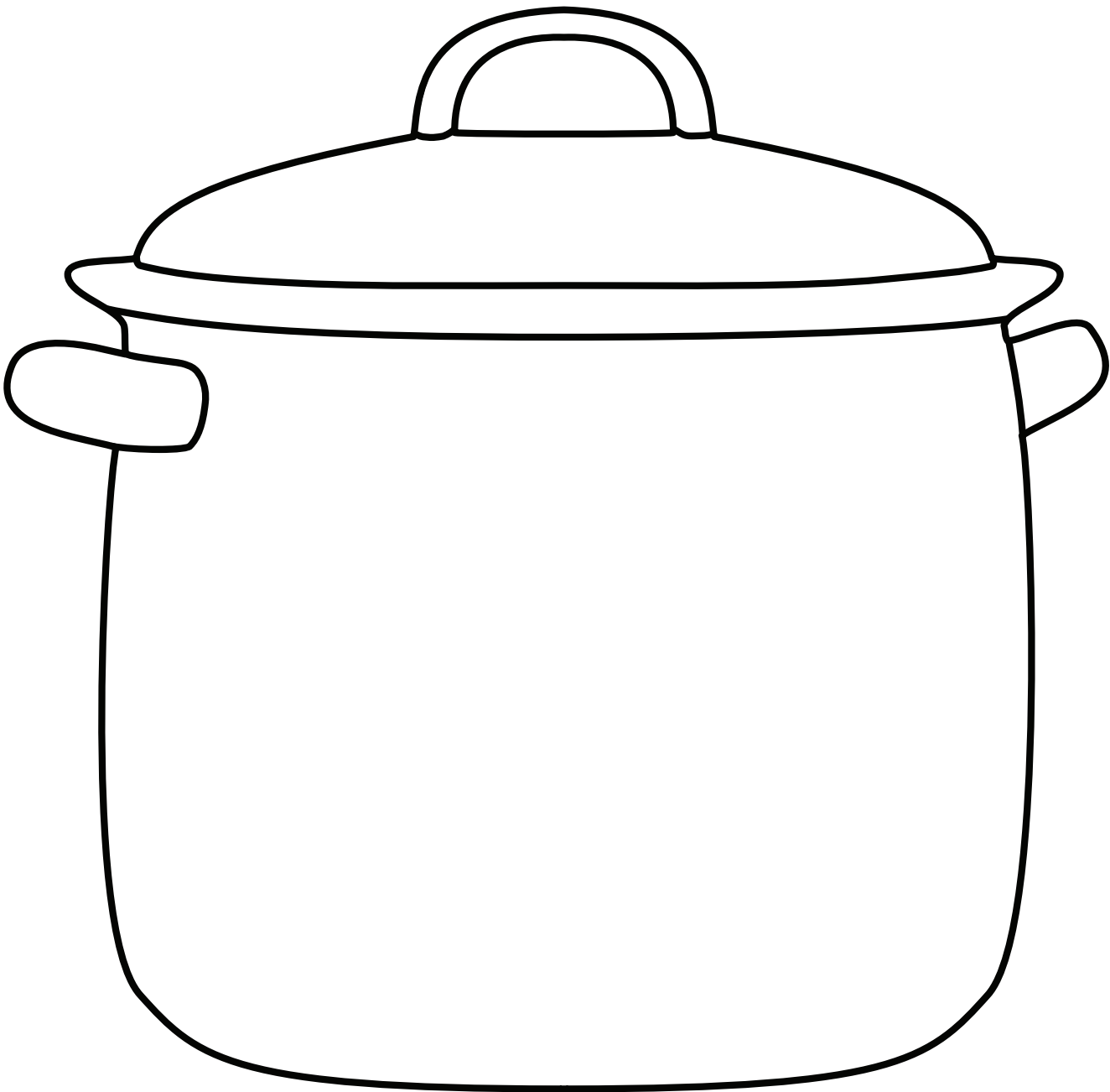
CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT CAN I DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I do unto others as I would have them do to me.</i>

FRIENDSHIP SOUP

IN THE POT, WRITE ALL THE INGREDIENTS
THAT MAKE A GOOD FRIENDSHIP.



FRIENDSHIP LETTER

Date _____

Dear _____

*I am writing this letter to you because
you are such a good friend. Here are the things
I like about you:*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I am so thankful to have a friend like you.

God bless you.

Your friend,



Rituals

Dear Facilitator: Do you have a family ritual or tradition? The other day I was speaking with my mother-in-law, and she was talking about putting flowers near someone's gravestone. After thinking about it, I realized that putting flowers on a grave was not one of my family rituals or traditions.

Today we are going to talk about why it is important to create family rituals.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about the importance of building friendships, and how we reflect Christ in our relationships with others.


 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** What are some things that you do every day? (i.e. brush teeth, eat, sleep).


Many times, we call these habits—habits we do to complete a task.

Rituals are related to habits, but they are different. A ritual is performed for a special significance, like to remember something or someone.

 **Share:** Share a story of a family ritual that you do. Today we will be focusing on rituals. Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Tonight, during dinner, we'd like you to talk about rituals.

1. What are some of your family's favorite activities that you do together? Generate a list.
2. Are you able to call these rituals?
3. As you listen to others talking, have you come to realize that you have more rituals than you thought?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes



In general, habits are behaviors that are self-generated. A habit is a decision that is made at some point until it becomes a regular behavior without putting much thought into it. In 1960, Maltz noticed that it took 21 days to get used to seeing a new face after plastic surgery, and a phantom limb was felt for 21 days after removed. Phillippa Lally, in London, researched 96 people over 12 weeks and discovered, on the average, it takes 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic.

So, for instance, the first time you ate a donut at work, it was a decision. The 45th time, it was a habit that occurred, essentially, unthinkingly. The first time you backed your car out of the driveway, you had to give it some serious thought and decision making. The 100th time, it happened automatically.

Rituals, by contrast, are almost always patterns developed by an external source and adopted for reasons that might have nothing to do with decision-making. Someone might celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey not because they love turkey, but because society has indicated that's what we eat at Thanksgiving. We might

make the sign of the cross when praying not because it makes our prayers more effective, but because that's how we learned to pray (if you are Catholic), and the physicality of the ritual has become comforting (<https://www.quora.com>).

God made use of rituals, helping His people remember significant events. There are many feasts ordained by God and described in the Old Testament. Leviticus 23 provides seven such feasts: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. Some of the feasts have already been fulfilled through the work of Christ: Passover, Feast of Unleavened

Bread, Feast of First Fruits, and Feast of Weeks. Others are a shadow of things to come when Christ comes again: Feasts of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. There are other feasts such as Tisha B'Av, Hanukkah, and Purim that have their origins during Old Testament history but are not directly commanded in the Old Testament.

As rituals are to help us remember, it is important for your family to know and understand the ritual.

Take one of your rituals or create a new one.

- Write out the steps.
- Write out the meaning of the ritual.
- Tell how you will explain it to your children.
- Share with the group.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

1 Corinthians 11:2

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Family Time		RITUALS	

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what a family ritual is.
- Help children be aware of the benefits of family rituals.
- Help children be aware of types of family rituals.
- Help children identify their family rituals.
- Help children value family rituals.

Family rituals are specific practices that family members repeat together again and again.

These are behaviors that you perform the same way at the same time. Family rituals are done with a certain purpose in mind and are done intentionally. Family rituals tell a story about a family and are even said to provide stability when families face challenging times. Another name for family ritual is family tradition.

Many rituals are teachings or practices that have been handed down from grandparents and even great-grandparents, but some families may create new ones of their own. A family ritual is meaningful behavior that

your family engages in that makes the statement: This is who we are! This is how we roll!

Family rituals help family members feel secure. Rituals and traditions give them a feeling of belonging to something unique and special. Family rituals give families an opportunity to share the important times in life together as they value and enjoy each other's company. Did you know that researchers found that family rituals were linked to positive self-identity, self-confidence, and a strong sense of comfort and security in children?

Family rituals are also connected to stronger family unity.

Even the Bible speaks about the importance of keeping traditions such as baptism, communion, and marriage. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15, Paul tells the people, “So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” Along with our family traditions, we also have our Christian faith traditions to keep. Some of those rituals and traditions are praying, attending church services weekly, taking communion, and anointing the sick with oil for healing. Then there are Christian traditions you may celebrate in the church as well as in your family such as Christmas, Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter. These rituals and traditions have been passed down over hundreds of years.

Speaking of traditions and rituals in the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 11:2, Paul says to the people, “I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.” Even in Bible days certain traditions and rituals were practiced and considered very important.

There are different kinds of family rituals. There are family celebrations that family members look forward to such as weddings, birthdays, family vacations, or maybe even Cinco de Mayo or Kwanzaa! Then of course we all have wonderful memories of holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, and the fun and festivities that surround them. We celebrate these holidays, and the rituals and activities we take part in convey important cultural values of the family.

For example, on Thanksgiving, members of a family might volunteer to serve dinner at a food kitchen for those less fortunate. This ritual is teaching children the values of compassion, giving, and serving others. Perhaps every year during the Christmas season, a family puts up a manger scene in their home so that they can reflect on Jesus—God’s gift to the world. On Easter Sunday, Christian

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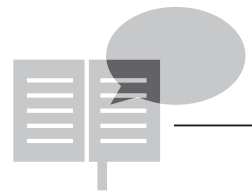
families go to church to celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead to save us from our sins and give us an abundant life.

Each one of us can name special activities that our family practices for these special occasions. Is there a specially decorated chair at the dinner table for the birthday king or queen at your house? Maybe for Kwanzaa you light the Kinara Candles daily. Does your family wear exclusive clothing, prepare special foods, or put up cultural decorations to celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

There are many more family rituals and traditions, and families often create their own! A family ritual can be as simple as a family game night to emphasize that your family values having fun and enjoying one another's company. A ritual can be eating dinner together every evening at the dinner table to indicate that the family values unity and togetherness. Another ritual could be a family who reads the Bible together on Sunday afternoon or prays each night before bed or in the morning before school. This ritual is teaching children the importance of prayer and faith in Jesus. Family rituals draw family members closer together, help them bond with one another, and affirm family values. All these rituals are cherished occasions that families remember for many years to come.

The celebration of ritual events helps us better understand our family and ourselves and attests to what our family holds dear. To make family rituals more memorable, take time to talk to one another about the traditions your family keeps and why they are important to you.

Psalm 145:4 says, "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts." And So, children, make sure you are involved, listening, and learning so that you can keep the family traditions alive and well. Family rituals are a way to pass on to future generations beliefs, values, history, and culture that are significant to your family testimony.



Scripture SUPPORT

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

1 Corinthians 11:2

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.

Psalms 145:4

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Hebrews 10:25

...not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the LORD's death until he comes.

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the LORD.

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Joel 2:12

"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

“My Family Rituals” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/o9STz3B3ffw> (discuss briefly)

If it's not possible to view video, do activity without it.

After the lesson and video, have children fill out “My Family Ritual” worksheet.

When finished, have children share what they wrote.

*Smaller children can color a picture of a happy time with their family.

AGES 12-16

Materials

“My Family Rituals” Worksheet

Pencils, crayons or markers

Have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/Eb0XHjzM8aQ> (discuss briefly)

If not possible to view video, do activity without it.

After the lesson and video, have children fill out “My family Ritual” worksheet. When finished, have children share what they wrote.

*Older children can recap the lesson for the group.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I ENJOY AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR
FAMILY RITUALS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>The rituals that my family practices bring us closer together.</i>

MY FAMILY RITUALS

Family rituals are repeated behaviors that bond family members together and cause them to reflect and celebrate family values and beliefs! Rituals may also be called traditions. **Think it through and share:**

Our family has a daily ritual of

Every week our family has a ritual of

Our family enjoys a spiritual ritual of

Our family has a recreational ritual of

The holiday rituals my family celebrates are

My favorite family ritual is

It is my favorite because

Family Life Cycle

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on family life cycle.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain each stage of the family life cycle.
2. Identify one's stage within the family life cycle.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes

Welcome 5 minutes

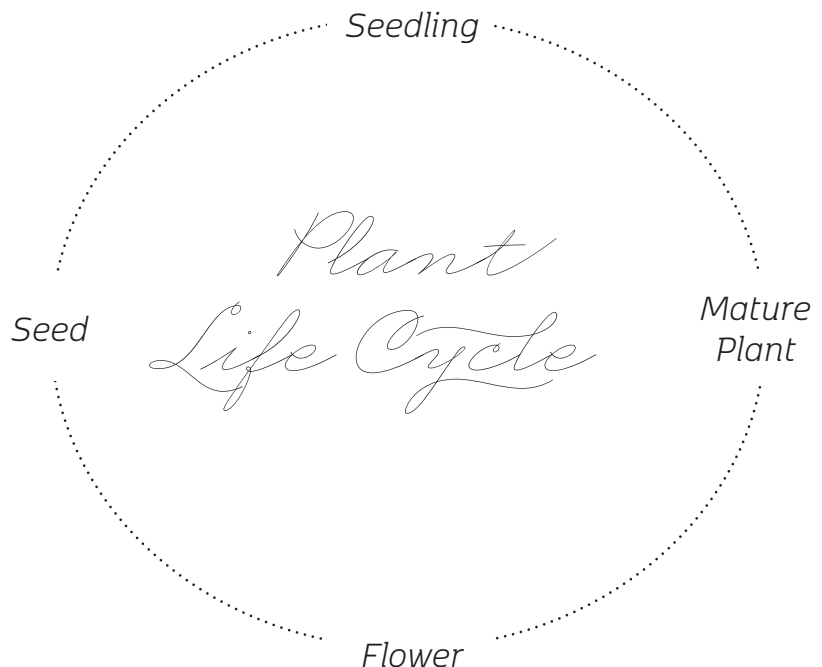
Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about rituals. We identified current family rituals and created new family rituals.

Ask: Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes


Step: Think about the steps it takes to grow a flower. According to Kean University, the seed will sprout and produce a tiny, immature plant called a seedling. The seedling will grow to adulthood and form a mature plant. The mature plant will reproduce by forming new seeds, which will begin the next life cycle. They produce different types of reproductive cells called spores.



Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain each stage of the family life cycle.
2. Identify one's stage within the family life cycle.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Recall and discuss different stages of development of your children (i.e. walking, talking, sitting up, kicking a ball, etc.).

1. Were all the stages easy?
2. How did they overcome obstacles?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes



According to research, there are six stages of life:

(see handout on next page)

1. Leaving home: single young adults
2. The joining of families through marriage: the new couple
3. Families with young children
4. Families with adolescents
5. Launching children and moving on
6. Families in later life

Identify the life cycle in which your family is in right now.

DISCUSS

- Think back to previous cycles. What were some of the obstacles?

- Read the story of Abraham and discuss life cycles at that time.

In the book of Genesis, we read about Abraham's life cycle. See if you can identify each cycle of Abraham's life. What were key principles that happened during that time and what changes happened in the family?

DISCUSS

- Where is your family within the life cycle?
- Understanding the cycle, what do you need to work on to help your family?

Handout 1

FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

Cycle	Emotional Process of Transition	Changes Needed for Family to Proceed Developmentally
1. Leaving home: single young adults	Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Differentiation of self in relation to family of origin b. Development of intimate peer relationships c. Establishment of self re work and financial independence
2. The joining of families through marriage: the new couple	Commitment to a new system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formation of marital system b. Realignment of relationships with extended families and friends to include spouse
3. Families with young children	Accepting new members into the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adjusting marital system to make space for child(ren) b. Joining in childrearing, financial, and household tasks c. Realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grandparenting roles
4. Families with adolescents	Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to include children's independence and grandparent's frailties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shifting of parent/child relationships to permit adolescent to move in and out of system b. Refocus on midlife marital and career issues c. Beginning shift toward joint caring for older generation
5. Launching children and moving on	Accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Renegotiation of marital system as a dyad b. Development of adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents c. Realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren d. Dealing with disabilities and death of parents (grandparents)
6. Families in later life	Accepting the shifting of generational roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintaining own and/or couple functioning and interests in face of physiological decline; exploration of new familial and social role options b. Support for a more central role of middle generation c. Making room in the system for the wisdom and experience of the elderly; supporting the older generation without over functioning for them d. Dealing with loss of spouse, siblings, and other peers and preparation for own death—life review and integration

Notes

SUMMARY

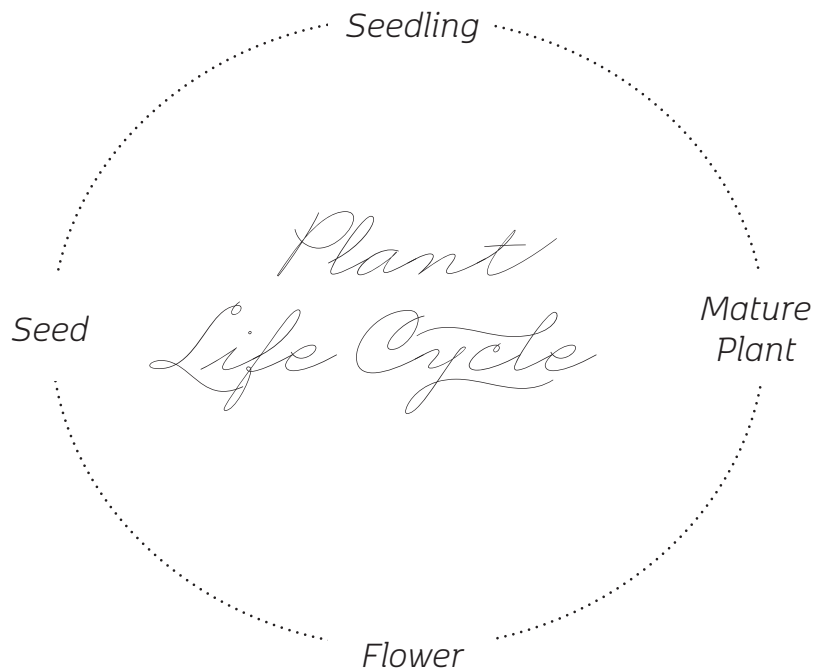
We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain each stage of the family life cycle.
2. Identify one's stage within the family life cycle.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?





Objectives

- Help children be aware of the meaning of family life cycle.
- Help children be aware of the importance of family life cycle.
- Help children be aware of the five stages of the family life cycle.
- Help children be aware of skills and lessons learned in stages of family life cycle.

Every living thing goes through a life cycle. In school you may have learned about the life cycle of a plant or a frog. But did you know that humans go through a life cycle too? We are going to learn about the family life cycle. This life cycle is the stages we go through as a member of the family from infancy to our adult years and into retirement. In each stage of life, we need other people to help us learn important skills and lessons. That is why when God created you, He put you in a nurturing family and gave you loving parents that are just right for you. Along life's journey, you will learn many lessons

that are intended to prepare you to one day step out on your own as an adult. God has a plan for you to accomplish the purpose He has for you. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

God has great plans for your life!

Let's look at the five stages of the family life cycle. The first stage is the independent stage. Everyone begins the life cycle as single person. As parents encourage and cheer them on, their

adult children leave their parents' home to begin a new life of independence. They begin their new career and move into their own living arrangement. This period can be challenging to young people as they attempt to practice the values they have been taught growing up. Lessons that they have learned about integrity, leadership, trustworthiness, stewardship, and being responsible will be of great necessity now that they are in charge of their own lives. Hopefully, the most important lesson they have learned by now is to keep God first and to remember to talk to Him every day (Psalm 16:7-9).

Single people strive to be solely accountable to take care of themselves. They will need to handle their finances efficiently and budget wisely. All aspects of keeping in good health are up to them—their medical, physical, emotional, and nutritional needs are their responsibility. During this time, single people develop new friendships and social peers who become their support system rather than relying on parents and other family members as they once did.

As they successfully achieve their independent status, they begin to think more about committing to a family of their own. Although earlier, this young single was enjoying new found freedom, as time passes, being alone loses its pleasure and excitement. In Genesis 2:18, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable to him." Therefore, this single person begins to think about joining together with just the right person to bring satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment.

When this happens, they are ready to enter what is called the coupling stage. Dating becomes thoughtful and more purposeful because they have a desire to share their life with that special someone. And in time, after much prayer, God brings the perfect mate into the single man or woman's life. During their dating season, they come across the right person and decide to get married and become one. In Genesis 2:24, it says, "That

is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

This young couple is joining their families through marriage. Now they bring into their new family the values, expectations, beliefs, and life lessons that the husband and the wife learned from their own families as they were growing up. They must work together as a new couple to agree upon beliefs, values, and goals for their family. Marriage is truly a covenant blessing, and the Bible says, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD” (Proverbs 18:22).

In a successful marriage, the husband and wife become companions and best friends.

They are bonded together in love and oneness. It must be a relationship of respect, trust, honor, faithfulness, compromise, and sharing. If the husband as well as the wife internalized those principles in their years growing up, then their relationship should go well. Marriage requires consistent communication with one another and putting the other person before yourself. Most importantly, a good marriage requires both the husband and wife to place God at the center of their marriage and to ask for His help in making their marriage pleasing to Him.

In most marriages, at some point, God puts the desire in the couple’s hearts to have children. This desire comes from God’s original command to Adam and Eve. In Genesis 1:28, God said to them, “As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.” So, the next stage is parenting. Having a baby is a big decision for a young married couple, and it is one of the most challenging stages of the life cycle. God answers the couple’s prayer and blesses them with a precious new baby. In Psalm 127:3 God tells us, “Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.” Bringing a child into the family changes everything! Caring for a baby takes time away from the couple’s own alone time. Now, instead of the

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Psalms 16:7-8

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Genesis 2:18

It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable to him.

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Proverbs 18:22

He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

husband and wife being able to just focus on each other's needs, their new gift from God demands the constant attention of them both. The young mother and father will use all the skills they have learned in life about sacrificing, problem solving, commitment, and loving unconditionally. They realize that God is holding them accountable to raise this child for Him. In Proverbs 22:6, God tells them, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” As the years go by, these parents, with God's guidance, successfully bring their child along from infancy through early childhood through teen years to young adulthood.

The couple now enters the empty nest stage of the family life cycle. Like a mother bird pushes her babies from the nest, human parents must do the same. It is time for their adult child to leave the provision and protection of their parents' home and begin the independent stage of the life cycle as their parents once did. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” The empty nest means that parents no longer have the day to day responsibility of taking care of their adult child. The grown child has moved out into their own living arrangements, and for the first time in years, the parents have their home to themselves. This is a time of happiness and celebration for the most part, but some parents miss having their adult child being home and experience a little sadness for a while. The empty nest stage can be a wonderful opportunity for parents to develop an adult-to-adult relationship with their child.

During this time, parents can begin to spend more time together, and possibly when the time comes, be ready to share in the joy of their adult child marrying and starting a family!

The final stage of the family life cycle is retirement. Now that the retirees are free from the responsibilities of raising children, this can be a very rewarding time in life. Because the couple is

no longer setting the alarm clock to wake up for work, schedules tend to be more relaxed. In Ruth 4:15 God says to seniors, “He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.” The retirees have more freedom to do some of the activities that they were unable to do in earlier years like traveling, serving God in the church, or just relaxing and enjoying the fruits of their life’s work.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the meaning of the family life cycle.
- What is the independent stage of the family life cycle and why is this stage a big step?
- What is the coupling stage and what is the single person’s focus during this stage?
- Why is the parenting stage considered the most challenging?
- What does empty nest mean?
- Why do parents look forward to the retirement stage?



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 9:7

As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.

Psalms 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

Ruth 4:15

He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Family Life Cycle diagram

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/sainf6nxCvY> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, lead children in filling out the Family Life Cycle diagram. Children can either write the stages in the boxes or draw pictures of the stages (see teacher guide).
- When children are finished, have them decide what stage their family is in.

**Smaller children can draw a picture of themselves when they are grown up.*

AGES 12-16

Materials

Family Life Cycle diagram

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/sainf6nxCvY> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, lead children in filling out the Family Life Cycle diagram. Children can either write the stages in the boxes or draw pictures of the stages (see teacher guide).
- Have children tell which stage of the Family life cycle is most interesting to them and why.
- When children are finished, have them decide what stage their family is in.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

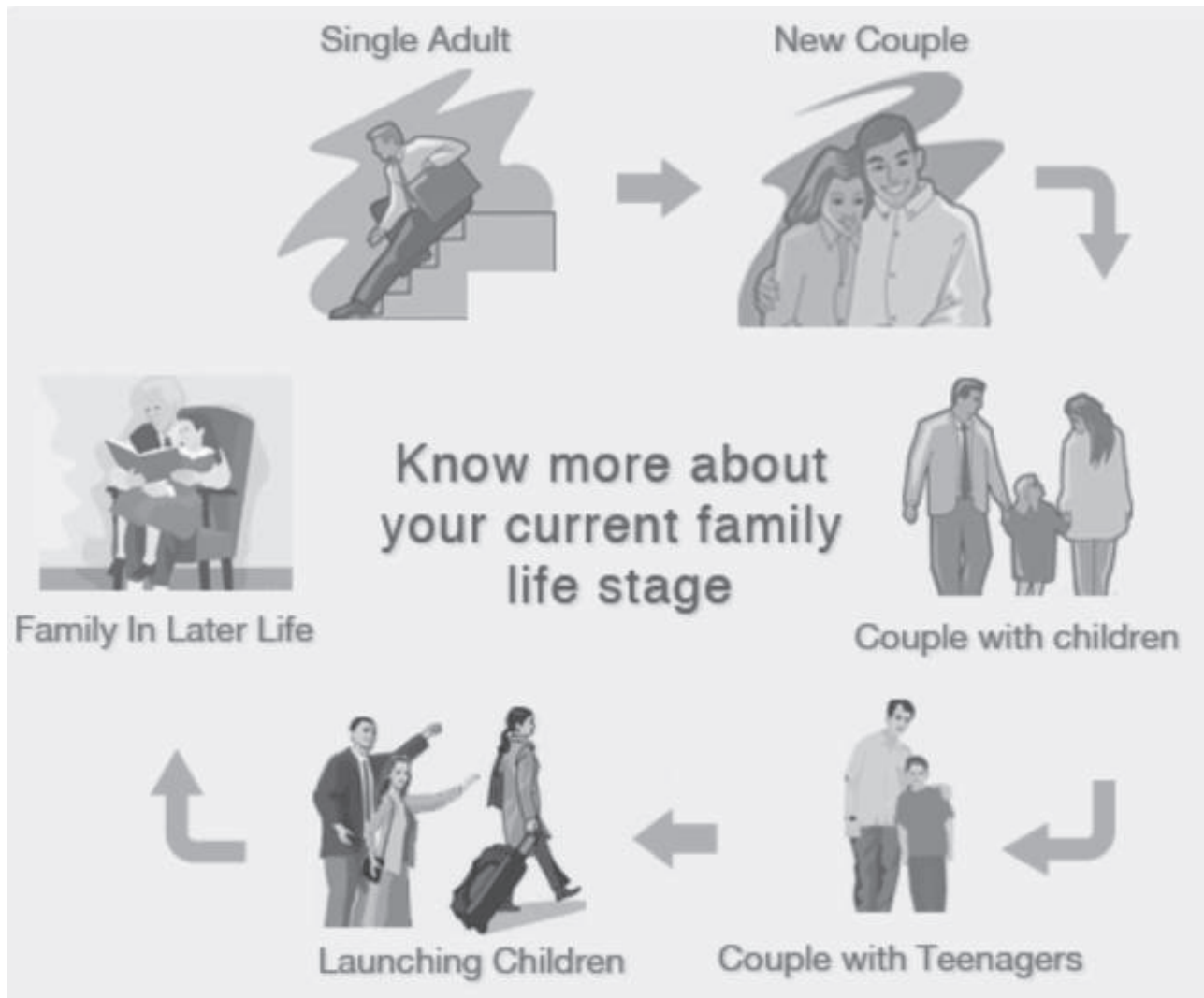
AM I DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO BE PREPARED
FOR THE INDEPENDENT STAGE OF THE FAMILY
LIFE CYCLE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

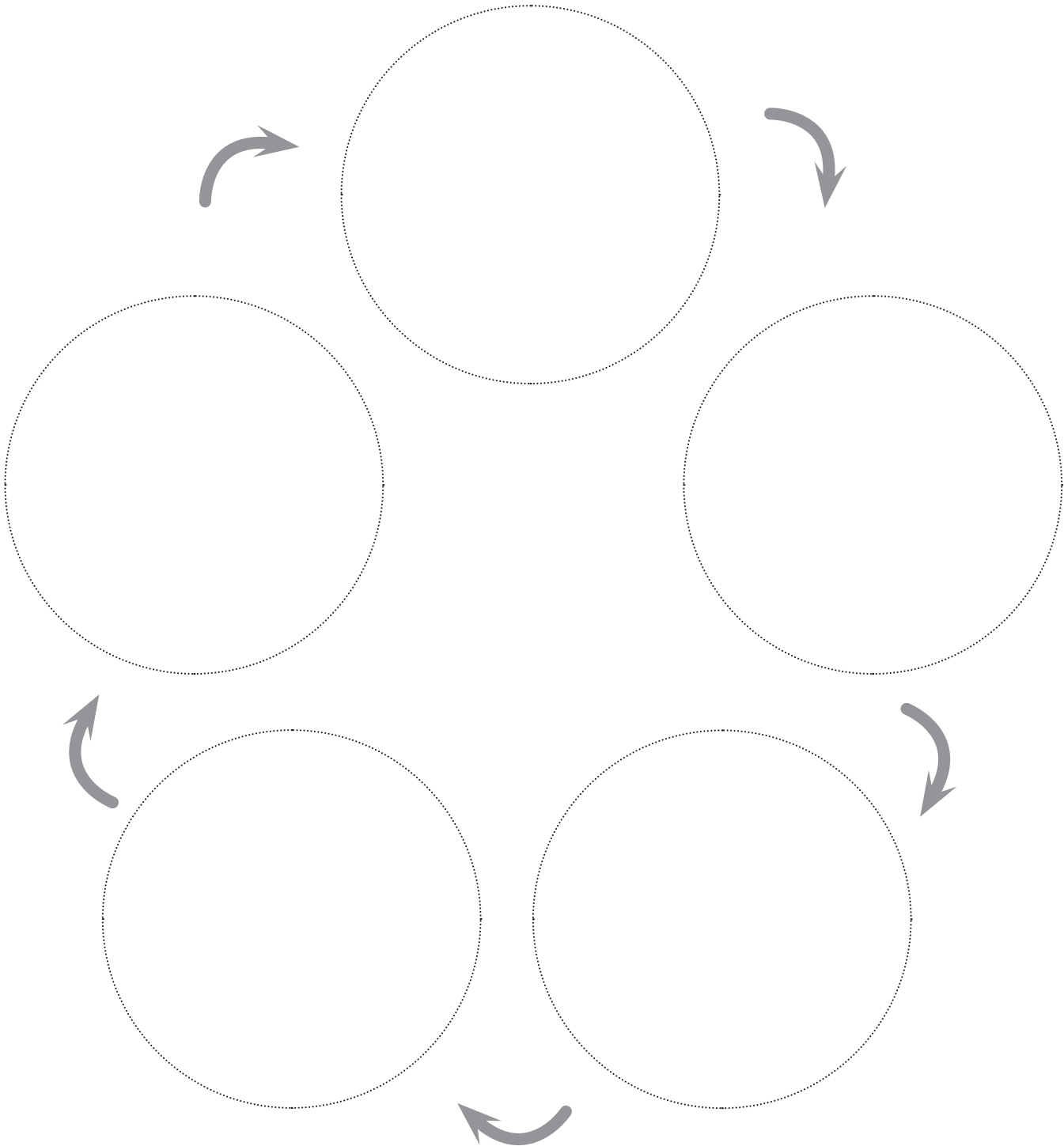
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?

A gray silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, with a speech bubble containing three dots above it.	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I can do all this through him who gives me strength.</i>

STAGES OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE



FAMILY LIFE CYCLE



Who We Are as a Family

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on who we are as a family—part two. In order to help you prepare, we suggest that you go back and review the lesson on who we are as a family—part one. Within that lesson, we studied the values that each family holds and how those values inform wise decisions. This session will dig deeper into the family, looking back over previous generations.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Draw their family tree.
2. Identify patterns within the family.
3. Uncover ways to identify strengths and opportunities within the tree.


This week's commitment statement is: One way we learn how to live is from our parents and grandparents.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome 5 minutes


 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about the stages of the family life cycle.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** Think about who you look like. Do you look like your mom, dad, or other family members?

 **Share:** Tell a story about a family characteristic that is strong within your family.

Demonstrate: Facilitator explains his/her family tree.


 **Do:** Draw a picture of your family tree.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Draw your family tree.
2. Identify patterns within the family.
3. Uncover ways to identify strengths and opportunities within the tree.

This week's commitment statement is: One way we learn how to live is from our parents and grandparents.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Using your family tree, discuss memories of each person on the tree.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Think about your children. By looking at them, how do you know that you are the father or mother? Not only do we pass down physical characteristics to our children, but we also pass down mental, emotional, social characteristics.

Families are important.

In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to stay away from certain people. For instance, they were not to associate with those from Moab. However, we see that Ruth from Moab connects with His people, and later we learn that Jesus was a descendant from Ruth.

How or why did the pattern break?

Take the family tree that you created at the beginning of the session. Look at it carefully. What do you know about each person? As you look at your family tree, what patterns of behavior or character traits do you observe in each family member?

- What patterns or traits were strengths?
- What patterns or traits did you not like?
- For patterns that you do not like, how do you break the pattern?

“What does the Bible say about breaking generational curses?” (<https://www.gotquestions.org/generational-curses.html>)

Answer: The Bible mentions “generational curses” in several places (Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Numbers 14:18; and Deuteronomy 5:9). God warns that He is “a jealous God” punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him.

Notes

It sounds unfair for God to punish children for the sins of their fathers; however, there is more to it than that. The effects of sin are naturally passed down from one generation to the next. When a father has a sinful lifestyle, his children are likely to practice the same sinful lifestyle. Implied in the warning of Exodus 20:5 is the fact that the children will choose to repeat the sins of their fathers. A Jewish Targum specifies that this passage refers to “ungodly fathers” and “rebellious children.”

So, it is not unjust for God to punish sin to the third or fourth generation—those generations are committing the same sins their ancestors did.

There is a trend in the church today to try to blame every sin and problem on some sort of generational curse. This is not biblical. God’s warning to visit iniquity on future generations is part of the Old Testament Law. A generational curse was a consequence for a specific nation (Israel) for a specific sin (idolatry). The history books of the Old Testament (especially Judges) contain the record of this divine punishment meted out.

The cure for a generational curse has always been repentance. When Israel turned from idols to serve the living God, the “curse” was broken, and God saved them (Judges 3:9, 15; 1 Samuel 12:10-11).

Yes, God promised to visit Israel’s sin upon the third and fourth generations, but in the very next verse, He promised that He would show “love to a thousand generations” who love Him and keep His commands (Exodus 20:6). In other words, God’s grace lasts a thousand times longer than His wrath.

For the Christian who is worried about a generational curse, the answer is salvation through Jesus Christ. A Christian is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). How can a child of God still be under God’s curse (Romans 8:1)? The cure for a “generational curse” is repentance of the sin in question, faith in Christ, and a life consecrated to the LORD (Romans 12:1-2).

“What are some patterns that need breaking within your family tree? How will you break them?”

1. Identify the pattern that needs to be broken.
2. Ask God for help in eliminating the pattern.
3. Examine what typically takes place before the pattern or activity is done.
4. Identify alternative solutions.
5. Choose a solution.
6. Do it.
7. Reflect—did it work? If not, what can help?

For some, a 12-step AA process will work:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We decided to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, we promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God



Scripture SUPPORT

Joshua 24:15

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

Psalms 103:17

But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.

Notes

as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were:

1. Draw your family tree.
2. Identify patterns within the family.
3. Uncover ways to identify strengths and opportunities within the tree.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

COMMITMENT STATEMENT:

One way we learn how to live is from our parents and grandparents.



Objectives

- Help children be aware of what family identity is.
- Help children be aware of the meaning of genealogy.
- Help children be aware of the meaning of a family tree.
- Help children be aware of family traits.

As we discovered earlier, a family's identity is expressed in their family values, goals, and vision. When a Christian family takes the time to establish a strong family identity, it will help that family live a prosperous and meaningful life. It will also allow God to use that family to serve others and lead them to follow Jesus. A family that develops a strong identity knows what they stand for, and they know their purpose. They have God at the center of their family and seek His wisdom as they dream dreams and set goals. In the Bible, in Joshua 24:15, it says, "but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." He wanted everyone to know that God was at the center of his family.

Most families who have a strong identity did not just automatically happen to be that way. In most cases, if you search the family's history, you will find that the strength of that family was passed down from their father and mother's parents (their grandparents) and their grandparents' father and mother (their great-grandparents) and even farther back than that!

Your parents, you, and your siblings; your aunts and uncles; and other relatives all play a part in telling the story of what your family is about—where you come from, what you believe in, and what the vision is for the future of the family.

Notes

Do you ever ask yourself why your parents do some of the things they do or why your parents have taught you certain beliefs and traditions?

It is very possible that much of what you experience in your family life were practices and beliefs that were handed down from past generations—how you celebrate various holidays and how you cook certain favorite foods. Many times, there are activities and recipes that have been a part of the family for years.

When we look back at the history of the members of a family to try to understand some of the reasons for these patterns or practices, it's called researching your family genealogy. Even the Bible speaks of this, referring to former generations. Job 8:8 says, "Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned." Studying your family's genealogy can help you answer the questions: Where did my family come from? How did I get to be the way that I am? Genealogy is the study of family history. How you became the way you are has a lot to do with your ancestors. Your great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives are all a part of your family tree. Each person is a part of a branch on the tree. When you and your siblings were born, you became a part of the branch on the family tree started by your mom and dad.

It is thought provoking and fun to look at the members on you family tree and find out who they are, what they look like, and other entertaining facts about them. You might be surprised to find out that there are things about you that are like your ancestors. You might find that you got the color of your hair from your dad who got that color from his mom. You may have got your beautiful eyes from your mother who got them from her father. Maybe you have a brother or sister who is very tall, and no one can figure out how they got to be so tall because your mom and dad are short. And where did your cute dimples come from? If you look back at your ancestors on your family tree, you will find the answer to these questions and many others.

Families don't just pass down physical features, but unfortunately, they can also pass down medical problems such as allergies, color blindness, or diseases like diabetes. Even the likelihood of needing to wear glasses can be handed down from family members of the past. But that is not all. Talents and abilities can run in families as well such as the ability to sing beautifully, play an instrument exceptionally well, or paint amazing pictures. You even get some of your personality from individuals in your family tree. Maybe you love quiet time alone reading a favorite book like your mom does or playing baseball like your uncle. Have you ever had someone ask you, "Who are you more like, your mom or you dad?"

So, what is answer to that question?

Family values are also passed down through your family tree. In speaking of Cornelius, the Centurion, Acts 10:2 says, "He and all his family were devout and God fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly." Character traits like being a prayerful and generous person can also be inherited through the family. God's blessing can even be passed down through Christian members of your family tree. Psalm 103:17 says, "But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children." That is so wonderful! If you have the blessing of God upon you, you can cause it to be continued down through the branches of your family tree.

Learning about your family genealogy can help you learn a lot about your family and yourself. Studying your family history helps you see the ability you must bestow positive character traits and blessings on family members to come in future years. You can also pass down to future generations the good things about the LORD that you and your family have learned and practiced during your journey here on earth. Psalm 145:4 says, "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts." God wants you to become all that He created you to be. Then you will be able to pass on the gifts and blessings in your life to the next generation.



Scripture SUPPORT

Joshua 24:15

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

Job 8:8

Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned.

Acts 10:2

He and all his family were devout and God fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

Psalms 103:17

But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.

Psalms 145:4

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

Notes

DISCUSS

- What is a family's identity?
- Where does a family get their strong identity?
- How does a family have a strong identity?
- Where does a family attain the beliefs and traditions they have established?
- How do ancestors play a part in why you are the way you are?
- What is a family tree?
- What can be passed down through your family tree?
- What is family genealogy?
- Why is it helpful to study your family history?



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Family Tree worksheet

Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/7gJYi9V-jtI> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, have children fill in their Family Tree worksheet and write in the information they know. Have them color their family tree. (If children don't know all the information, they can fill it in later with their parents).
- When children are finished, have children share with the group who the people are on their family tree. Smaller children can color a picture of their family.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Family Tree worksheet

Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/c_cfGoOaXR8 (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, lead children in filling out their My Personal History worksheet.
- When finished, if time permits, have children fill in their Family Tree worksheet and write in the information they know. Have them color their family tree. (If children don't know all the information, they can fill it in later with their parents).
- When children are finished, have children share with the group who the people are on their family tree. Smaller children can color a picture of their family.

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DEVELOPING EXCELLENT CHARACTER
TRAITS TO PASS ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS
ON MY FAMILY TREE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*As for me and my family,
we will serve the LORD!*

MY PERSONAL HISTORY

1. What is your full name? _____
2. How did you get your name? _____

3. What is your birthdate? _____
4. What is your birthplace? _____
5. What nicknames do you have? _____

6. What is your mother's full name? _____
7. What is her birthdate and birthplace? _____
8. What do you admire most about your mother? _____

9. What is your father's full name? _____
10. What is his birthdate and birthplace? _____
11. What do you admire most about your father? _____

12. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____
13. What are your brothers and sisters names? _____

MY FAMILY TREE



Grief and Loss

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on grief and loss.

When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin. In reading the story of Lazarus in John 11, we see how Jesus wept when His dear friend died.

How do you handle grief and loss? What are you teaching to your children?

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

This week's commitment statement is: We are to grieve those who have died before us.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting



Do: Facilitator please review these resources prior to the session:

- https://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/preparing_for_death.pdf
- <http://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/imce/VicHospChildrenTeenGrief.pdf>
- <https://www.victoriahospice.org/patients-families/useful-brochures>

Welcome *5 minutes*



Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about family identity. We mapped out our family trees and identified behaviors, patterns, character traits, and values that other members in the family pass down generation to generation.



Ask: Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*



Say: This week we are going to focus on grief and loss. When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin.




Ask: How do you handle grief and loss? What are you teaching to your children?

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Many of you have pets or have had pets in the past. Sometimes, when a pet gets old or sick, it dies. Death is a normal part of life. While death is a normal part of life, so are our memories of the pet.

During dinner, discuss the following with your family:

1. How many of you have pets? How old is your pet?
2. What can you do to remember your pet?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Family Time	GRIEF & LOSS

When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin. In reading the story of Lazarus in John 11, we see how Jesus wept when His dear friend died. Later in John 20, we see how Mary responds to Jesus's death.

SUMMARIZE THE STORIES:

- * **John 11** (Death of Lazarus)
- * **John 20:11** (Mary's response to Jesus's death)

Most of us will agree that there are so many wonderful things about life—the love of parents, siblings, and other special people in your life.

Then there are other things we take for granted like enjoying the warm summer sun, playing joyfully in the winter snow, eating pizza or an ice cream cone, laughing at the ridiculous things your pet

does, or even just listening to or dancing to your favorite song on the radio. The list could go on and on.

All the pleasantries in our lives inspire us, strengthen us, and give us a reserve joy to help us pull through when tough and painful times come into our lives. These times include death.

Each one of us grieves in different ways, but research tells us that there are stages of grief. Not everyone will go through each stage in the order in which the model shows, but the stages will help us better understand grief.

Here is the grief model we call the Seven Stages of Grief: (<http://www.recover-from-grief.com/7-stages-of-grief.html>)

Notes

1. SHOCK & DENIAL

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being too overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

2. PAIN & GUILT

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully and not hide it, avoid it, or escape from it with alcohol or drugs.

You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

3. ANGER & BARGAINING

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. Please try to control this as permanent damage to your relationships may result. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion.

You may rail against fate, questioning "why me?" You may also try to bargain in vain as a way out of your despair (i.e. "I will never drink again if you just bring him back.")

4. DEPRESSION, REFLECTION, & LONELINESS

Just when your friends may think you should be getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be "talked out of it" by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving.

During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

5. THE UPWARD TURN

As you start to adjust to life without your dear one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your depression begins to lift slightly.

6. RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

7. ACCEPTANCE & HOPE

During this stage, the last of the seven stages in this grief model, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

You will start to look forward and plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without pain or sadness—the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

You have made it through the seven stages of grief.

Facilitator, share an example of how you handled death. What worked and didn't work?

Ask your group these questions: How have you handled grief? What worked and didn't work?

So how can you help those grieving?

Chuck Swindoll, author and pastor, gives us some tips.

Action Steps:

1. Be Patient

- Encourage your person to give himself whatever time that it takes to heal emotionally.
- Encourage him to keep a routine, get lots of rest, and not try to attempt too much but to direct his energies toward healing.

2. Maintain Friendships

- Encourage the person to let others comfort and share in the journey toward healing.
- Encourage him not to become isolated but to seek meaningful connection with others.
- Make a list of friends to call.
- Locate a grief support group.

3. Feel the Pain

- Help the person understand that the intensity of the pain is normal and that eventually it will begin to subside. The pain will probably never disappear completely, but it will become bearable.
- Trying to avoid the "terrible pain" only prolongs the grief.
- Trying to avoid a loss by hiding the feelings will only cause problems in other areas—emotionally, spiritually, or physically.

Dealing with loss in a healthy manner can be a major avenue to growth and life-transforming change. The



Scripture SUPPORT

Deuteronomy 31:8

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Psalms 31:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

Notes

person must move forward by experiencing the grief, while at the same time, rejoining the living through acts of giving and receiving.

We are healed of grief only when we express it to the full.

—Charles R. Swindoll

Share the Quick Reference Guide to Marriage and Family.

Based on lessons learned from the following recommended resources, share your insights and discuss.

- https://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/preparing_for_death.pdf
- <http://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/imce/VicHospChildrenTeenGrief.pdf>
- <https://www.victoriahospice.org/patients-families/useful-brochures>

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

This week's commitment statement is: We are to grieve those who have died before us.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Family Time		GRIEF & LOSS	

Objectives

- Help children be aware that grief and loss are a normal part of life.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about tough times.
- Help children be aware of why grief and loss are necessary.
- Help children be aware of what we can do when we are faced with pain and sorrow.

Most of us will agree that there are so many wonderful things about life! We have the blessing of loving parents and siblings. Then there are wonderful, fun gatherings with family and friends! There are things we take for granted like enjoying the warm summer sun and playing joyfully in the winter snow. We enjoy eating delicious pizza or a scrumptious ice cream cone, laughing at the ridiculous things your pet does, or even just listening to or dancing to your favorite song on the radio! The list could go on and on. All the pleasant, enjoyable and fun things in our

lives inspire and strengthen us. They give us a reserve of hope and joy to help us pull through when tough and painful times come. Yes, along with all of the good things about life, there are some times in our lives that can make us forget for a moment that life is good.

There is a saying, "Into each life some rain must fall!" What this means is sadness, disappointment, hurt, and sometimes even tragic things will happen in a person's life. Fortunately for you, during the tough times, you have your parents and others who love you to guide you through these

Notes

unwanted times of grief and sorrow. And whether it is a very young child, a teen, or an adult, people handle life's difficult times in their own way.

During these difficult times, remember God is with you too. Having God in our lives is very important in times of confusion, fear, or sadness because we have the assurance that we are not alone. In the Bible, in Deuteronomy 31:8, God makes this promise to us, "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Whether you are dealing with a minor hurtful situation of a broken friendship at school, being cut from the basketball team, or something much more painful such as the loss of a precious family member, your parents are there to support you. Through prayer they will lead you in taking your hurt, disappointment, and sadness to God. Only He can help you work through the dark times, heal your broken heart, and restore your peace and joy. In Isaiah 41:10 God says to us, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

None of us want these distressing times of pain and loss in our lives, but the truth is, even the tough times are a necessary ingredient in making us become the person God created us to be. When we experience crisis and tragedy, it builds our character. It develops our capacity to have compassion and empathy for others when they are hurting.

The good news is that we are more resilient than we may think. Resilience means we can recover from difficult, even tragic circumstances. Tough times help us to grow and learn about ourselves and other people. It is through our own times of trouble and grief that we learn how to comfort, encourage, and pray for others.

Just remember there are powerful life lessons hidden in every one of your hurting moments.

God knew we would have heart-wrenching times in our lives, so He gave us these directions in His Word, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6). When shocking and confusing situations happen in our lives, God tells us to not try to figure everything out using our own thinking ability, He tells us instead to turn to Him. We do this by talking to God in prayer. We can pray alone, but sometimes it’s even more comforting to pray with parents and other family members and friends.

God has given your parents a very important assignment concerning you. Their main job as parents is to raise you to be like Jesus. When God created man, Adam, and woman, Eve, He created them in His own image. When Jesus walked on this earth, He suffered many sorrows. Because we are made in His likeness, in this life we will experience some of the same feelings that Jesus felt. He experienced rejection, hurt, sorrow, and loss.

The Bible says, “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain” (Isaiah 53:3). So, we know that Jesus understands how we feel. Jesus also tells us not to worry about the trouble we may face in the world. He says in John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” And because we are made in Jesus’s likeness, and He has overcome the suffering in this world, we will overcome any hardship and misfortune that may come our way on our journey through life.

In the Bible, Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” God wants us to trust Him to care for us. He has promised those of us who love Him that everything, even things that cause us tears and sadness, will eventually work for our good.



Scripture SUPPORT

Deuteronomy 31:8

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Our responsibility is to keep talking to Him, trusting in Him, and loving Him no matter what. When we do that, God will heal our hearts, give us peace, restore our happiness, and bless our lives.

In Psalm 31:24, God says to us, “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

DISCUSS

- What are some of the good things in life?
- How do all the good things in our lives help us?
- Why do some people suffer sickness, disease, and even death?
- What good purpose can pain, sadness, and disappointment serve in our lives?
- What does it mean to say, “We are resilient”?
- What main assignment has God given to your parents concerning you?
- What does Romans 8:28 mean when it says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”?



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

Who Helps Me worksheet
Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Kg2lkCxjMg8> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, emphasize that the fall of mankind is the reason people suffer from sickness, disease, and death, and one day Jesus will return and remove ALL sin, sickness, disease, and death.

- Discuss with children that when we go through any challenging times in our life, God puts people in our life who help support us. These people who help us are our support team.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Who Helps Me worksheet

Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Kg2lkCxjMg8> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, emphasize that the fall of mankind is the reason people suffer from sickness, disease, and death, and one day Jesus will return and remove ALL sin, sickness, disease, and death.
- Discuss with children that when we go through any challenging times in our life, God puts people in our life who help support us. These people who help us are our support team.
- Have children fill in the names of their support team on the “Who Helps Me” worksheet. When they are finished, have them share who are the people who help them when they need support.

There is another video about grief and children.

You decide if you think it would benefit the children in your group. <https://youtu.be/EnC3mV6b-ww>



Scripture SUPPORT

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Psalms 31:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I PRAY FOR MYSELF AND OTHERS
WHEN WE FACE CHALLENGING TIMES?

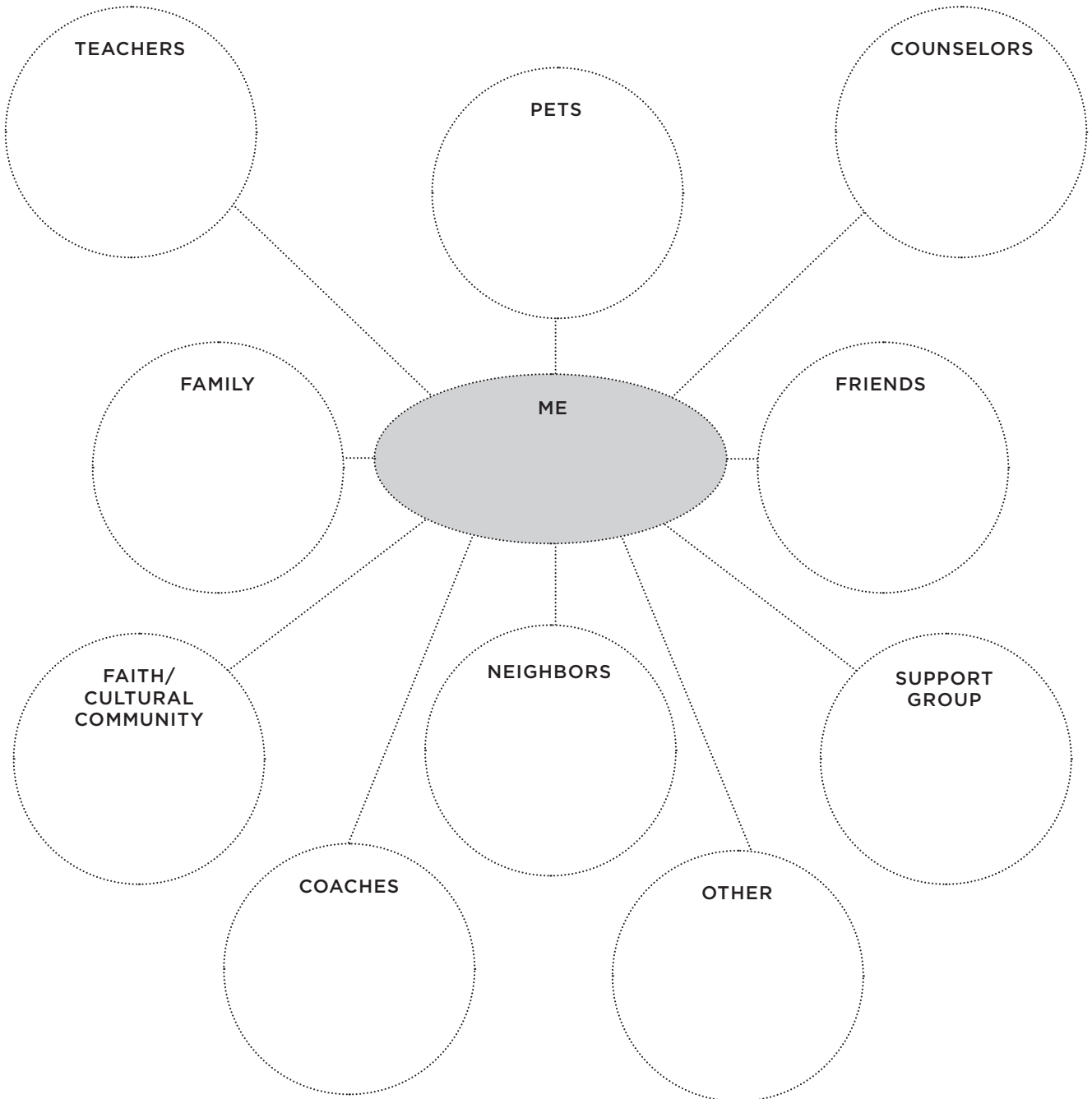
CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>God is always with me. He will never leave me or abandon me.</i>

WHO HELPS ME

In the circles, write the name of those who support you and how they help.



Intro to Values

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on values.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Identify family values.
2. Create ways to protect family values.

This week's commitment statement is: Values shape our character and impact our actions.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting



Do: Print handouts:

- http://thecompoundeffect.com/downloads/english-core_values_assessment.pdf
- <http://carleton.ca/mentoring/wp-content/uploads/Values-Assessment-Community-College-of-Vermont.pdf>

Welcome *5 minutes*



Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about grief and how to deal with loss in a healthy manner.



Ask: Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

If you had to leave your house in a hurry, what is the something that you would never want to leave behind? Why? Read the story, "The Magi Visit the Messiah" found in Matthew 2. What gifts did the men bring? The Magi (wise men) brought gold (precious metal), frankincense (perfume), and myrrh (anointing oil).


Why were these gifts brought to Jesus? They were brought to Him because they were often given to a king. Today we are going to discover what we value as a family.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Identify family values.
2. Create ways to protect family values.

This week's commitment statement is: Values shape our character and impact our actions.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** As you enjoy your dinner, discuss and answer the following questions with your family:

1. If you had the opportunity to visit Jesus right after he was born in Bethlehem, what would you bring as a baby gift?
2. Why would you bring Jesus this gift?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes



Why kinds of gifts did your children come up with to give to Jesus? In John 3:16, what did God give? What was the cost? We read in Philippians 2 how Jesus emptied himself.

Read the passage and discuss what it meant for Jesus.

Values are what is important to us—what we “value.” There are worldly values such as wealth, power, revenge, family, vanity, and status. These are the most important things to people who do not honor God. Then there are values the Bible teaches such as compassion, humility, generosity, and forgiveness. The values taught in the Bible are directly opposite of worldly values.

The family is the main place where children practice and adapt to the values they will live by. Christian parents teach and model

the values they feel are essential to raising healthy, conscientious, steward-minded, and productive children.

ACTIVITY

Do the handout found at http://thecompoundeffect.com/downloads/english-core_values_assessment.pdf

DISCUSS

- As you worked through the assessment, who would like to share the person you most respect and why?

- What one quality would you want instantly?
- What are the three most important values you want to pass on to your children and why?
- What values will still be valued 100 years from now?
- What are the top dozen qualities of the “ideal” man or woman?
- What are your top three values?
- What difference does it make to identify these values?

Matthew 6:21 says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

How can you protect and strengthen what you value?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Identify family values.
2. Create ways to protect family values.

This week’s commitment statement is: Values shape our character and impact our actions.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you’ve learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

INTRO TO VALUES

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what values are.
- Help children be aware of the importance of values.
- Help children be aware of their character traits.
- Help children be aware of how we learn the values we live by.
- Help children be aware of values taught in the Bible.

Values are what is important to us in life. There are worldly values such as wealth, power, revenge, fame, vanity, and status. These kinds of values are the most important things to people who don't honor God. Then there are values the Bible teaches such as love, compassion, humility, generosity, and forgiveness. The values taught in the Bible are directly opposite of worldly values. The values you live by really do matter to God. They signal to the world what you believe, what kind of person you

are, and how you live your life. Galatians 5:19-21 tells us that without practicing Christian values, we cannot be a part of God's kingdom.

One of the most critical decisions parents must make is deciding what values are important to them and what kind of character they want their children to develop. The family is the main place where children learn, practice, and adapt to the values they will live by. Christian parents

teach and model for their children the values they feel are essential for them to grow up and become healthy, conscientious, productive, steward-minded, and godly. And when you honor your parents and obey them, you will become everything God created you to be.

Your values shape your character. Your character is made up of values like being honest, friendly, kind, respectful, caring, and responsible. These qualities are called character traits. These are just a few positive character traits a person may have—there are many more! A character trait is a value that you have practiced so well and so consistently until it has become a part of who you are and the way you live each day. There are negative as well as positive character traits. What are some of your character traits?

Just think what the world would be like if everyone had negative character traits like being dishonest, mean, unfriendly, jealous, conceited, and disrespectful. The world would be a terrible, miserable place to live.

On the other hand, think of what the world would be like if everyone learned and practiced the values that are found in the Bible. People would show respect for one another. Those with wealth would be willing to share with those less fortunate. Folks would tell the truth rather than lie and be quick to lend a helping hand to those in need. What a wonderful world that would be!

Your character is developed through the values that your parents teach you. That is why the principles Christian parents instill in their own hearts and in their children's hearts must be values that follow the instructions taught in the Bible. When parents spend time reading the Bible with their children, the values spoken in the Scriptures will be imparted into their children's hearts and become a part of their character.

Here are some of the main values that the Bible tells us that we are to live by:

Notes

Notes

1. Worship God only. In the Bible, a religious leader asked Jesus which of God's commandments was the most important. Jesus answered him saying the most important commandment is to "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:29-30).
2. Show respect for all people. After saying the main commandment is to worship God only, Jesus said the next major commandment is to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).
3. Be humble. In Matthew 20, Jesus tells His disciples that whoever wants to be great must serve others. Jesus also told them that "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35, Matthew 20:26).
4. Be Honest. In the Bible, honesty was so important to God that He made it one of the Ten Commandments. God tells us to be truthful in all our affairs (Exodus 20:16).
5. Live a godly life. Jesus reminds us that as Christians our bodies belong to Christ, and the Holy Spirit lives inside of us. Jesus tells us we must honor our bodies. He says to us, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19).
6. Be generous with money and time. In the Bible, God lets us know that we are our brother's keeper. He tells us that each of us has something to give. As God blesses us, He wants us to share generously with those among us who are less fortunate (Proverbs 14:21).
7. Be who we say we are in Christ. Jesus did not like hypocrites. A hypocrite is a person who pretends to be living a godly life, but they really are not. God says that the things that we do matter more than the things we say. God wants us to really live the godly life we say we are living (Matthew 23:28).

8. Don't be haughty and arrogant. The Bible reminds us that not one of us is perfect. We should not think we are better than anyone. God does not want us to judge or look down on other people. God tells us to work on practicing our own Christian values, so we can become all He wants us to be (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8).
9. Don't hold grudges. Jesus told us to make peace with those who have wronged us. The Bible tells us that if we have a disagreement with someone, we are to work through our problem and move on (Matthew 5:43-44).
10. Be quick to forgive. Because of His Grace and mercy, God forgives all our sins and shortcomings. Because we are God's children and in training to be like Him, He says we must also forgive. Our heavenly Father tells us that if we want Him to forgive us, then we must forgive others. And we all need God's forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15).

As you can see, God has a lot to say about what values He wants us to live by. You are God's children in training to be like Him, and He has told you to honor your parents and obey them. You will please God when you listen to your parents and obey them as they guide you in this way (Ephesians 6:1-3).

DISCUSS

- What are values?
- Why are values important?
- Where do we learn most of our values?
- What is the best way for parents to teach their children values?
- What are character traits?
- What are some good character traits?
- What are some bad character traits?
- What are some of the values the Bible tells us to live by?

Notes



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

iPad, if possible (if not possible, do activity without recording)

Envelope or box

Pieces of paper with core values written on them (instructor cut from Values sheet included with the unit lesson)

Place strips of paper in envelope or box.

Have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/rY3t66pxa9c> (discuss briefly)

- After the lesson discussion and viewing the video, place children in groups of three to five. If the number of children is limited, put all the children in one group.
- Have one child from the group pull a strip of paper from the envelope or box.
- Children in the group will work together to do a short skit to teach the value that was pulled.
- With the iPad, record the children's skit. Then play the tape and let them view themselves.
- You can repeat the activity as many times as time allows.

*Smaller children can color a picture of what is important to them.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Values Check List

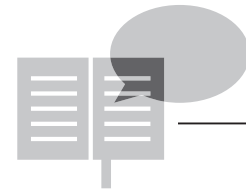
Pencils, markers

Have children view YouTube video:

https://youtu.be/VgWy_zzghw8 (discuss briefly)

- After the lesson discussion and viewing the video, have children pick the three values on the list that are most important to them. Have them fill in the “What’s Important to Me?” worksheet.
- Have them do a short presentation to the group demonstrating their top three values, where they learned the values, and how the values have helped them in their lives.
- With the iPad, record the children’s presentation. Then play the tape and let them view themselves.
- You can repeat the activity as many times as time allows.

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the flesh are obvious. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Mark 12:29-30

“The most important one [commandment],” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”

Mark 12:31

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Matthew 20:26

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

Mark 9:35

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Exodus 20:16

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.

Proverbs 14:21

It is a sin to despise one’s neighbor but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.

Matthew 23:28

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

1 John 1:8

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Matthew 5:43-44

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I LIVE THE VALUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT
TO ME IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*Your word is a lamp
for my feet, a light
on to my path. Psalm 119:105*

VALUES LIST

CUT WORDS INTO SLIPS TO PLACE
AND DRAW FROM AN ENVELOPE OR BOX.

courtesy	forgiveness
caring	love
friendliness	honesty
generosity	helpfulness
thankfulness	kindness

VALUES CHECK LIST (AGES 12-16)

Choices & Values: What's Important to Me?

Take a few minutes to think about the meaning of the items listed below.

Indicate with a check mark the items that are important to you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> A physical appearance to be proud of | 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplishment of something worthwhile |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> To graduate with honors | 22. <input type="checkbox"/> A secure and positive family life |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Being an honest person | 23. <input type="checkbox"/> An enjoyable, leisurely life |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> To have political power | 24. <input type="checkbox"/> Unlimited travel, fine foods, entertainment, recreational, and cultural opportunities |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Being known as a "real" person | 25. <input type="checkbox"/> Getting things changed for the better |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> A meaningful relationship | 26. <input type="checkbox"/> A beautiful home in setting of your choice |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-confidence and personal growth | 27. <input type="checkbox"/> Chance to develop creativity/potential in any area |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment of nature and beauty | 28. <input type="checkbox"/> Owning a possession of great value |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> A life with meaning, purpose, fulfillment | 29. <input type="checkbox"/> To speak up for my personal beliefs |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing to learn and gain knowledge | 30. <input type="checkbox"/> To have better feelings about myself |
| 11. <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to help the sick and disadvantaged | 31. <input type="checkbox"/> To be needed and to be important to others |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> To be attractive to others | 32. <input type="checkbox"/> To become a good parent |
| 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Some honest and close friends | 33. <input type="checkbox"/> Have a better relationship with my parents |
| 14. <input type="checkbox"/> A long and healthy life | 34. <input type="checkbox"/> To be sexy |
| 15. <input type="checkbox"/> A meaningful relationship with God | 35. <input type="checkbox"/> To persevere in what I am doing |
| 16. <input type="checkbox"/> A good marriage | 36. <input type="checkbox"/> Time for prayer |
| 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction/success in the career of your choice | 37. <input type="checkbox"/> To give of myself freely in helping others |
| 18. <input type="checkbox"/> An equal opportunity for all people | 38. <input type="checkbox"/> A safe and secure environment |
| 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom to live life as you want | 39. <input type="checkbox"/> To be loved by a special few |
| 20. <input type="checkbox"/> A financially comfortable life | 40. <input type="checkbox"/> To be trusted by others |

List below the number of the four or five items that are most important to you:

A. _____ B. _____ C. _____ D. _____ E. _____

Creating a Supportive Home

Dear Facilitator: This week's lesson is about creating a supportive home. Our homes are supported best when we have structure or rules in place to provide protection and security for our families.

Rules are meant for our good, and as parents, we should always make rules for our children by considering what is best for each child. The lesson incorporates Proverbs 6:20-23, which establishes the authority of parents and shows the benefits of obeying their commands and instructions. Parents' corrective discipline and life guidance are ways to a successful life. The lesson uses the principles of making rules, sticking together, and staying in charge as ways to encourage parents about rule setting.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain the benefits of rules.
2. Create rules that support the family to get along and enjoy being together.


This week's commitment statement is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** We are so glad to welcome everyone back again this week.

Last week we spent time identifying family values and creating ways to protect those family values.

Has anyone tried something this past week that made a positive difference that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes


 **Say:** In today's lesson, we are going to talk about how rules benefit our families. This week's commitment statement is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.

All of you already know how to set rules and do it every day with your children. It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the benefits of rules.
2. Create rules that support the family to get along and enjoy being together.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table:

1. What rules do you have in your family for kids and parents?
2. Describe a time when following a family rule was very helpful.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Proverbs 6:20-23 says, “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your other’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

Creating a supportive home starts with establishing authority in the home. Creating a supportive home begins with parents following God so that they can lead their families.

Next, it is important for parents and adults in the home to have an agreement to stick together about rules.

Finally, parents must stay in charge together. It is important to understand that we are never alone in our parenting. Whether it’s your spouse, other adults, or God, someone is always there.

The following are three basic principles to keep in mind: make rules, stick together, and stay in charge.

Tonight, we will discuss these principles, practice making some rules, and talk about how creating a supportive home really works in families.

As we said a moment ago, our family commitment statement tonight is: I commit to creating a supportive home with rules and guidelines to help my family get along and enjoy being together.

Notes

Would anyone be willing to share one of the rules you have in your family that you discussed at dinner tonight? Why do you have that rule for your family?

As we think about the rules in our families, it is good to consider why they exist. Rules are meant for our benefit and to protect us and lead us. God has also given us rules in the Bible for these same reasons.

Rules create structure and guidelines for our lives and are helpful for children and adults.

Imagine what it would be like to drive around town or ride the bus without speed limits and no rules about driving. We might not even get anywhere!

The same is true for our families.

Rules, guidelines (or boundaries), and limits also provide security. Think of your house or apartment which has walls, doors, and a foundation. Your house has a structure which keeps your family safe, warm, and dry. Boundaries and rules for your family give emotional structure for your kids.

If we fail to set appropriate rules and limits, we undermine our ability to create a supportive home. It's like a house without walls.

To illustrate this point, let's observe two styles of rule setting.

Parents are Rule Setters.

The facilitator or other should demonstrate the extremes of parents making too many and too few rules. Act out both styles of rule setting.

Example 1: The drill sergeant who takes the role of making too many rules and being overly strict. Include several strict rules and deliver them in a rigid manner.

Example 2: The opposite extreme—someone who is overly permissive, taking the position that children know what is best for them. They fear squelching children's creativity and want to be their child's friend. Present this form in an overly compliant manner.

Parents, would you choose to follow either of these styles of rule setting for your family? Why or why not?

Let's observe at one more style.

Example 3: (Demonstrate a middle ground type of rule setter and incorporate the following principles in the example.) The parent who demonstrates how to make clear, specific rules for the way they want their child to behave. Model sticking together with their spouse or other adults in the household regarding rules, and apply appropriate consequences for misbehavior in a respectful manner.

How would this style of rule setting benefit your family?

As leaders in our families, the goal is to be leaders who think about what is best for your children. Sometimes it is so easy to just think about what it takes to get them quiet.

Sometimes we are tired, overwhelmed, and have a lot on our minds as parents, and it is hard to think about how to best discipline our children.

Even so, consequences are usually to teach our children rather than just to punish. Rules are about training children to act in ways that reflect the family's values, and appropriate consequences further help our children do what is right.

Tonight, we are going to think about the rules in our family, their effectiveness, and how well they match our family values.

ACTIVIDAD

Do the Take-Home Worksheet

We should think about our family values when making rules. Rules are our "values in action."

As parents, we want to think and talk together about what is important for our children to learn and do.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 6:20

My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Colossians 3:20

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the LORD.

Ephesians 6:2-3

*"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—
"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*

Notes

A few examples of values might be honesty, education, hard work, peacefulness, organization, generosity, good manners, responsibility, and many more.

If one of your values is honesty, you may want to have a rule that says we must always tell the truth in our family. If it is good manners, you may want to have a rule that says we must always say “please” and “thank you.” Always be clear in the rules you set and try to stick to just a few.

1. Work in groups to write down something that is important to your family.
2. Circle two to three rule categories to get started.
3. Work together in your group to write three rules that are clear and easy to understand.

Rules should be clear so that everyone knows what they are. It’s important that parents are consistent and stick together on establishing and teaching rules.

What are some of the ways we can support one another as adults/parents to stick together on establishing and enforcing rules?

Enforcing rules by staying in charge helps children learn that there are consequences for their actions.

Hebrews 12:6 tells us that discipline is hard to take, but it gives us many benefits.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

**CREATING A
SUPPORTIVE HOME**

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that being in a supportive home is a gift from God.
- Help children to be aware that God wants all children to live in a supportive home where they can learn about Him and what the Bible teaches.
- Help children to be aware that parents enforce rules and boundaries that are necessary in a supportive home.
- Help children to be aware that rules and boundaries in a supportive home help family members do well at home, at school, and in the world.
- Help children to be aware that God commands parents to train their children according to what the Bible teaches.
- Help children to be aware that the bible instructs them to honor and obey their parents.

Belonging to a family and having a comfortable, supportive home to live in is a gift from God. Parents work with God's help to create the kind of home that will support you as you learn about Him and learn to live your life according to what the Bible tells you to do. Every family member must do their part to make home a loving, safe, orderly, respectful, peaceful, and enjoyable

place for adults and children to get along and enjoy being together.

We have learned that your family is a team, and your parents are the team leaders or coaches. They set the guidelines for how the family members are expected to behave. Like any team, for its members to do well, the coaches must set certain rules and boundaries, and team members

Notes

are expected to learn and follow those rules. Family rules are much the same. Parents set the rules and boundaries, and they are meant for your good.

We have also learned that family serves as a kind of training camp where we learn and practice what we need to do to live well. In the world, there are many rules and boundaries. For us to learn about rules and boundaries, we must start learning as soon as we are old enough for our parents to teach us. Therefore, home training and support are so important. In the Bible, God tells you to keep your father's commands, and to obey our mother's teaching (Proverbs 6:20). This is God's way of letting us know that in addition to your parents being your first teachers, He has given parents the responsibility to be the authority over you. As the authority, parents set rules and boundaries that will help you learn appropriate behavior and make your home a healthy place for family members to live and grow.

Can you imagine people driving around town with no traffic rules or speed limits? It would not be safe, and it would cause a lot of trouble for everyone. The same is true for rules in our homes. Rules teach family members how to treat each other with respect and help family members get along better. A home where parents set no rules would be a place of confusion and trouble for members of the family.

When families learn to love and respect one another, and rules and boundaries are in place, it creates an environment where family members enjoy spending time together. Spending time together as a family is a very important. Whether it's going on a road trip, spending an evening at home playing board games, or popping some popcorn and watching a movie, the point is to be together. Spending time together creates family memories that brings families closer together.

God wants parents to make Him an important part of the family team. When God becomes a part of the family, parents pray and ask Him for His help, and He is happy to be involved. Children learn what the

boundaries are and what their parents' expectations are. God helps parents make rules that will be fair, effective, and create the kind of home that will be peaceful and enjoyable for everyone.

Children, God has given you a responsibility too! The Bible tells you to obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right (Colossians 3:20). The Bible also tells you to honor your father and your mother so that you will have a long life (Ephesians 6:2-3). You must always remember that parents are in charge, and they are commanded by God to help you discover your gift and your purpose in life, and to train you in the way God says you are to behave.

You can pray and ask God to help you to remember the rules and guidelines your parents have set for you and to give you the strength to obey. With your help, God will give your parents the wisdom to create a loving home for you to live in that will guide you and support you while you grow to become the person He wants you to be.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what a supportive home is.
- Lead children in a discussion about why families need to create a supportive home.
- Lead children in a discussion about why parents need to set rules, guidelines, and boundaries.
- Ask children how a supportive home is like a training camp.
- Ask children what families can do to get God to help them create a supportive home.
- Ask children what the rules, guidelines, and boundaries are in their home.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Candy bars

Clear packing tape

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/nh1ICEOrBtA>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Before the children arrive, tape candy bars onto the wall high enough so kids can't reach them without standing on chairs. The instructor should tell the kids the object of the game is to reach the candy bars without the help of furniture or other people.

For this game, let the kids try to grab the candy bars. Once they've given up, have them form groups and work together to reach the candy bars. Also, give the children tips to help them get the candy down from the wall. For example, tell them to try and give each other boosts or to use a chair. Discuss.

This activity reflects on the importance of having a support system (in your home) to lift you up.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Envelopes

Writing utensils

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/nh1ICEOrBtA>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Have the instructor tell the children to think about some of the things their families have done to support them. Let them think for a few minutes.

Then, the instructor should pass out the paper and the writing utensils to the children. Tell the children to make a small list of some of supportive things their families have done for them.

Once they are done with that, have the children write a thank you letter to their parent/guardian thanking them for everything they have done to support them.

Put the letters in envelopes and have them present them to their parents. Allow time for children to read their letters if they would like.

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE OUR HOME
EVEN MORE SUPPORTIVE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*I honor my parents as
they set rules and create
a supportive home for me
to grow into the person
God created me to be.*

1. WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY VALUE?

2. WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

RULE CATEGORIES			
Homework	Bedtime	Chores	Mealtime
Curfew	Dating	Car Use	Friends
Health	Church Attendance	Music	Phone / Video Games

CHOOSE 2 CATEGORIES

_____ & _____

MAKE 3 RULES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Family Roles

Dear Facilitator: Today's lesson is focused on helping parents and children understand their roles. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:1-2, "Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise." From this passage, we understand that there is an order for the roles of children and parents. Parents are to be honored and are in charge, while children are to contribute by honoring their parents and being obedient. As you help your families understand their roles, it will be important to help parents realize the great responsibility involved in leading their children and helping their children become valuable contributors in the family.

This week we are going to focus on family roles. It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Identify roles of parents.
2. Identify roles of children.
3. Explain styles of parenting.

This week's commitment statement is: Be the parents your child can follow; be the child your parents can lead.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about how to create a supportive home by setting rules and guidelines for our family.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Today we want to talk about the roles of parents and children in our families. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:1-2, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise.” From this passage, we understand that there is an order for the roles of children and parents. Parents are to be honored and are in charge, while children are to contribute by honoring their parents and being obedient.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Identify roles of parents.
2. Identify roles of children.
3. Explain styles of parenting.

This week's commitment statement is: Be the parents your child can follow; be the child your parents can lead.

Each member of the family has a specific role and responsibility and is accountable to one another and to God for the work they do. Let's play a quick game called the Family Web to learn a little more about this subject.

**Do: Family Web:**

Materials: Yarn, balloon, handouts

1. Start with yourself, and throw the ball of yarn to one person, holding on to one end of the yarn.
2. The person who catches the yarn must say the name of someone in their family who depends on them and for what.
3. When you have thrown the yarn around, you will have created a web which illustrates how we are all connected to one another.

DEBRIEF

- What happens if we aren't connected? (You can throw a balloon on the web and have someone let go to see what happens.)
- What happens if you try to do someone else's role? (Have someone take someone else's yarn.)

In this debrief, it's important to help participants visualize the connectedness we have to one another and to help them see how the effects of dropping our responsibilities or taking on someone else's role changes the connectedness and strength of staying in our play.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you eat your dinner, discuss the following:

1. What are some ways that parents can help children in their roles?
2. What are some ways that children can help parents in their roles?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Scripture **SUPPORT**

Psalms 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

40 minutes

Parent Training

Family Tome

FAMILY ROLES

Family members work best together as they understand their roles as God has designed and feel valued for their contributions. Parents are the leaders, and children are the followers, but each one has responsibilities to lead and contribute in ways that benefit each other. We depend on one another for so many things, and it’s important that we understand our roles and work to be the best we can in the role that God has given to us.

Parents must be in charge and stay in charge. However, even though parents are “in charge,” the parenting approach that works best is not a dictatorship—it’s what experts call authoritative parenting.

Authoritative parents seek input from the children and show love, warmth, teaching, clear expectations, and avoid severe or harsh disciplines. Parents are clear and consistent and give choices to help their children develop the skill of making decisions. There are many positive benefits

for children parented in this manner.

Dictator parents are those who tell their children what to do, how to behave, and when to do so without allowing any room for flexibility, feedback, discussion, or input from the children—or sometimes even the other parent. They are very strict, demanding, and often don’t express much warmth or nurturing.

Of course, there are times that you may have to be the boss and give direction to your children with no questions asked.

For example, if a child is about to hurt himself, you wouldn't want to get his input before you give direction!

Permission parents allow children to do whatever they please. There is a lack of rules and little or no discipline. While these parents seem very loving and nurturing, they often act more like a friend instead of a parent to their child. Any rules they do have are usually not enforced, and parents often rely on bribes to get their children to behave.

A permissive or dictator type of parent does not show love. Being loving as a parent includes giving boundaries as well as providing a safe place to learn and grow.

Let's do a role play of different types of parenting.

(Refer to handout at the end of this unit) Choose six participants for each scenario below. Assign two parents to each parenting style: Dictator, Permissive, and Authoritative. Ask each set of parents to act out the scenario as the type of parent they were assigned. It might work best to use the written description shown in Appendix B.

- **Scenario 1:** It's bedtime and children do not want to go to bed.
- **Scenario 2:** Your child came in later than he was supposed to and has a worried look on his face.
- **Scenario 3:** Your child came home from the store with a candy bar that is not hers.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn about the different styles of parenting?

We've just discussed and role-played the differing styles of parenting, but it's also important for parents to help children become valuable contributors in the family. These skills are first learned in the family and will prepare your child to become a valuable member of society. As a parent, it's important to help your

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children feel like they are part of a team. When you are part of a team, you think of others before yourself, learn to be a good follower, and communicate respectfully to your leaders.

Some of the ways that parents can do this is by giving children chores and responsibilities and helping them honor you as their parents and others in authority over them. This is best done by modeling respectful communication yourself and always thinking of others first. Remember, we have also been commanded to not exasperate our children (Ephesians 6:4).

DISCUSS

How do chores and responsibilities help children become valuable contributors to the family? What role does respectful communication play in the family?

Parenting as an authoritative parent and helping your child become a valuable contributor can seem like an overwhelming job! Let's take a few minutes to write a job description for parents.


You might want to share this with your children at home or even involve them in writing a job description for you and for them.

ACTIVITY

Job descriptions for parents

- Write "Parent Job Description" at the top of the board.
- Write "Duties" on the left side of the board.
- Write the word "Benefits" on the chart.
- Write the word "Qualifications" and list experience, personal qualities, or education needed.

How do you feel about this job description?

 **Say:** Sometimes parenting can be difficult or overwhelming because we get tired, stressed, or don't know what to do! It's important to ask for help from God, your family, trusted friends, your church, and other experienced parents. Remember, be the parent your children can follow!

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Identify roles of parents.
2. Identify roles of children.
3. Explain styles of parenting.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

FAMILY ROLES

Objectives

- Help children be aware of the role God assigned to parents in the family.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about their parents' role.
- Help children be aware of the role God assigned children in the family.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about their role.
- Help children be aware of what it means to honor and obey their parents.

In the Bible, Psalm 127:3 says, "Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him." Yes, God wanted to reward your parents, so He created you, wrapped you in His love, and sent you to your parents as a special gift! And the instructions He gave your parents are written in the Bible. Proverbs 22:6 tells parents, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." And in Deuteronomy 6:2, when God is talking

about His Ten Commandments, He tells parents to teach His commandments, decrees, and laws to their children and their grandchildren so they would grow up learning to love and revere Him. God's Word tells parents they are to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength and teach their children to do the same (Deuteronomy 6:5).

The most rewarding yet challenging assignment on the earth is being a parent. There is no substitute for the special

relationship between a parent and a child. Parents need God's input and wisdom in order to be the kind of parent He wants them to be. God has placed parents in the role of authority and as a teacher in their children's lives. Again, in Ephesians 6:4, we hear the LORD telling parents to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the LORD. He is telling them to make sure they teach their children the guidelines in the Bible and to demonstrate for their children the way He wants them to conduct themselves.

God wants parents to raise their children in such a way that they will be more and more like Him. Parents can do this by modeling a godly lifestyle, teaching their children to pray, reading the Bible, listening to Christian music at home or when riding in the car, attending church, and worshiping God together as a family. The parent role is the most important assignment on the earth because God knows that parents are raising the next leaders of this nation, and more importantly, the next leaders of Jesus's church.

We have mostly talked about the role of the parent in the family, but God also spoke to children in the Bible, so they would know what role God expected of them. In Ephesians 6:1-3 God says, "Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Here, God is telling you that your role is to honor your parents and obey them. God is so serious about your role that He attached a promise to it. He says that if you are faithful to honor your parents and obey them, you will have a good, prosperous, and long life. You may be wondering what you can do to honor your parents. Here are just a few suggestions:

1. Forgive them. Remember there are no perfect parents. At times, your parents may make mistakes. There may be times where they disappoint you, and God is asking you to forgive them when they do.

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Jesus tells us to forgive. In Colossians 3:13, God tells us, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have grievance against someone. Forgive as the LORD forgave you.”

2. Speak well of your parents. Use your words to say good things to and about your parents. Encourage them, lift them up, and pray for them. Having the responsibilities of a parent is no easy task. When you speak words of love and respect over them and let them know you are praying for them, that truly blesses them.

3. Esteem your parents publicly and privately. When given an opportunity, thank them publicly as well as privately. Give them recognition for the values they have instilled in you and other meaningful ways they have impacted your life. You can even write a special tribute to your parents and read it out loud to them.

4. Seek their wisdom. You can honor your parents by confiding in them and asking them to share their knowledge on a subject. When you come against challenges or tough decisions in life, you honor your parents by sharing your struggles with them and asking for their advice. By doing this, you let them know you value their opinion.

5. Obey your parents. Obeying your parents is the most important way that you can show honor to them. Obedience goes along with honor. Though obedience honors your parents, it is really for your own good.

God has appointed your parents to be in charge of you, and He expects them to make decisions and set rules and restrictions in your life according to what they feel the Bible has instructed them to do. Parents are to lead, and you are to follow their leadership. Your parents understand what is necessary for you to grow up to become the person God created you to be. He has given them the responsibility to raise and train you in the way He wants you to go. However, children need to realize that true obedience comes from the heart. God

wants you to obey with a pleasant attitude. When you obey your parents, you are also obeying God. And when you obey your parents it not only pleases them, but it also pleases God!

DISCUSS

- What instructions did God give parents about raising children?
- In Ephesians 6:4, what does it mean for parents to raise their children in the training and instruction of the LORD?
- How can parents raise their children to be more like Christ?
- What responsibilities do the parents have in the family?
- What responsibilities do the children have in the family?
- What instructions did God give children about their role in the family?
- What are some ways to honor your parents?



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalm 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. This activity is focused on ages 4-16, all children.

AGES 4-16

Materials

iPad (If not possible, do activity without iPad)

“Family Roles” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Children will create their own YouTube video. After the lesson discussion, have the group understand that the main role God has given to parents in the family is the role of authority. Parents are to be the authority and God has instructed children to follow and respect the authority of their parents.

Next, guide the children in filling out “Family Roles” worksheet. Help them write on the lines other things that the father, mother, and children are responsible for in the family. Have children share with the group the responsibilities each of their family members have. As they share, use the iPad to record the students. When all are finished, upload the video to YouTube.

*Smaller children can color picture of how they help the family.

AGES 12-16

Ask the older children to use the responsibilities they listed on their combined sheets to create a rap song about family roles to end the YouTube video. As they share, use the iPad to record the students. When all are finished, upload the video to YouTube.

To create a rap song, have children work in a group to write a rap song about family roles. On paper, along with being the authority in the family, list several father responsibilities from their lists.

Next, list the responsibilities in the best sounding order. Then have the children tap the beat on the table top adding the words. Have them perform the song.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I SHOW RESPECT FOR MY PARENTS
AS THE AUTHORITY FIGURES IN MY LIFE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I follow the leadership of my parents as they are led by God's Word.</i>

FAMILY ROLES HANDOUT

CHOOSE 6 PARTICIPANTS FOR EACH SCENARIO BELOW

Assign two parents to each parenting style: Dictator, Permissive, and Authoritative.
Ask each set of parents to act out the scenario as the type of parent they were assigned.

DICTATOR definition: Tell their children what to do, how to behave, and when to do so without allowing any room for flexibility, feedback, discussion, or input from the children—or sometimes even the other parent. They are very strict, demanding, and often don't express much warmth or nurturing.

PERMISSIVE definition: Lack of rules and little or no discipline. While these parents seem very loving and nurturing, they often act more like a friend to their child than a parent. Any rules they do have are usually not enforced, and parents often rely on bribes to get their children to behave.

AUTHORITATIVE definition: Seek input from the children and show love, warmth, teaching, clear expectations, and avoid severe or harsh disciplines. Parents are clear and consistent and give choices to help their children develop the skill of making decisions.

SCENARIO 1:

It's bedtime and the children do not want to go to bed.

DICTATOR	PERMISSIVE	AUTHORITATIVE
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SCENARIO 2:

Your child came in later than expected and has a worried look on his face.

DICTATOR	PERMISSIVE	AUTHORITATIVE
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SCENARIO 2:

Your child came home from the store with a candy bar that is not his or hers.

DICTATOR	PERMISSIVE	AUTHORITATIVE
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FAMILY ROLES

Father

Mother

Children

Discipline

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on discipline. What exactly is discipline and how is it used in the Bible? It seems as a child, I had Ephesians 6:2 memorized: “Honor your father and mother.” Today, I still think it is a good verse, but as an adult, I also need to read Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD.” Amazing! I always thought it was the responsibility of the child to do what was right, but God also warns parents about provoking children to anger. How do we balance the two?

Previously we discussed the role of parents, and it was determined that being an authoritative parent is the best way to parent. Today we are going to get even more practical by finding out strategies to help us carry out discipline. It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

During the past lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about the roles of parents and children within the family.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

This week we are going to focus on discipline. It seems as a child, I had Ephesians 6:2 memorized: "Honor your father and mother." Today, I still think it is a good verse, but as an adult, I also need to read Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD." Amazing! I always thought it was the responsibility of the child to do what was right, but God also warns parents about provoking children to anger.

How do we balance the two?

Previously we discussed the role of parents, and it was determined that being an authoritative parent is the best way to parent. Today we are going to get even more practical by finding out strategies to help us carry out discipline.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

During the past lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, discuss the following questions at your tables:

1. Why is discipline important?
2. What are some discipline strategies used by your family?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Scripture SUPPORT

Hebrews 12:11

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Deuteronomy 8:5

Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

Proverbs 6:23

For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.

Proverbs 13:24

Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

Proverbs 19:18

Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD.

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Family Time	DISCIPLINE

Read some of your favorite Bible verses on discipline. Feel free to share some of those mentioned on page three. Share how you were disciplined as a child. How has discipline changed today?

In a group, define some key words—discipline, rod of discipline, and exasperate.

Have the groups share the definitions.

Learning how to do something for the first time is never easy.

Facilitator share a time when you had to work really hard at something. Was it successful?

Why or why not?

Do you remember the old movie *The Karate Kid*? In the movie, Daniel wants to learn karate. Mr. Miyagia finally agrees to teach Daniel karate as long as Daniel follows instructions without question. (Review YouTube video prior to session if able.)

So, what does self-discipline mean? We can look at several sources:

1. *New Webster's Dictionary*: Self-imposed regulation or ordering of one's own thoughts or actions, often with a view toward improvement (p. 457).
2. *Dictionary of Bible Themes*: The dedicated training, through the study of Scripture, prayer and self-control, which enables Christians to be more effective witnesses to the gospel, to lead lives more pleasing to God, and to win the crown that awaits those who are victorious over sin.

What does the rod mean? According to FaithTrust Institute.org, Sue Hille, writes the following:

There are people who use Psalm 23:4 as a mandate for corporal punishment of their children. Is that what the Bible really teaches?

One of the most popular portions of the Bible is Psalm 23. Verse four of that Psalm states: “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (KJV).

The assurance of comfort is not easily reconciled with corporal punishment. The Hebrew word for rod used in both the Psalms and Proverbs passages is “shabbat.” A shabbat is specifically the rod used by a shepherd in caring for sheep. The shabbat has five common practical uses: 1) it is the symbol of the shepherd’s guardianship of the sheep; 2) it can be thrown with great accuracy just beyond the wandering sheep to send the animal scurrying back to the flock; 3) the shabbat can be used to ward off an intruder and protect the sheep from any animals which may attack; 4) the sheep are counted as they pass under the rod; 5) it is used to part the wool in order to examine the sheep for disease, wounds, or defects which may be treated. There is no evidence that the rod is ever used to physically strike the sheep.

So how can you help your children through discipline?

READ OUT LOUD

After each section, pause to discuss.

Discipline. Reinforce good behavior.

- Most of the time, reinforcing good behavior is more effective than punishing bad behavior.
- Look for times when your child behaves well. When you notice a good behavior, reinforce your child for it.
- Praising your child is one of the best reinforcements. Praise can be saying something like, “I really appreciate how patiently you are waiting.” “I noticed how you put your dishes away

Notes

without me having to ask.” You could also give a high five. Especially if your child is young or has been struggling with bad behavior, there’s no such thing as giving praise for good behavior too often.

- Reinforcement can also include rewards such as a small treat, a fun activity, or being allowed to stay up late. However, be careful not to give these types of rewards every time your child behaves well. If you do, your child may come to expect a reward or may want to behave well only when they will be rewarded for it.

DISCUSS

Use appropriate punishments for bad behavior.

- When many people hear the word “punishment,” they think of spanking, pinching, or some other kind of physical punishment. However, physical punishment usually is not the best way to punish children for bad behavior.
- Time out can be an effective type of punishment. To use time-out for bad behavior, have your child go to a room or sit on a chair. There should not be things to play with or other people to talk to while your child is in time-out. Keep your child in time-out for about one minute for every year of age (a three-year-old stays in time-out for three minutes). If your child tries to come out of time-out before the time is up, start the time over. Your child may put up a fight for a while, but once they figure out that you are not going to change the rules, they will learn to cooperate. Eventually, many children will go to time-out without a fuss because they know that putting up a fight will only make time-out last longer.
- Taking away something that your child enjoys can also be an effective type of punishment. If your child behaves badly, you could take away TV time for an evening, bedtime snack, or another toy or activity that your child likes.
- Making your child do something that they do not like to do is another effective type of punishment.

You could make your child do an extra chore if they misbehave. Sometimes, you can even have your child do something that “fixes” what they did wrong. For example, if your child makes a mess, you could make them clean up the mess they made and clean up something else as well. Or, if your child breaks a sibling’s toy, you could make them do chores to earn money to buy a new one.

Notes

DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

Give consequences for good and bad behavior right away.

- Both reinforcement for good behavior and punishment for bad behavior are most effective when they happen immediately after the behavior. If the consequence happens a long time after your child’s behavior, your child will have a harder time making the connection between the behavior and the consequence.
- Giving consequences right away is especially important with young children or other children with learning disabilities or other conditions that may make it more difficult for them to connect the behavior to the consequence.

DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

Always follow through.

- You probably have seen a parent who is trying to leave a store and whose child is not coming. The parent might tell their child, “Okay, then, we’re going to leave without you.” If the child still doesn’t come, the parent can’t follow through on the consequence they have stated. Instead, the parent might end up carrying the child. In

this type of situation, the child learns that the parent does not always mean what they say—the consequences the parent says will happen might not. This makes the child less motivated to do what the parent tells them to do.

- To teach your child that you do mean what you say, always follow through on the consequences you say will happen. To do this, you do not give empty threats you cannot keep, such as telling your child that you will leave without them. Think ahead about some rewards and punishments that you can follow through on. Be sure to say only what you will actually do. Then, follow through on what you say.
- If you haven't been consistent at following through, your child may test you when you start sticking to your word. Be prepared for them to fight until they realize that fighting won't change your mind. Then, when they will know that you are serious, they will start acting in ways to avoid punishment and earn rewards.

DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

Give your child choices.

- It can be helpful to give your child choices, as long as both choices are okay with you and you will follow through on them. By giving two choices that are okay with you, you keep control over the situation. By giving your child a choice, you give them the opportunity to make choices and learn that their choices have consequences.
- Imagine that your child is not eating his dinner. You could tell your child, "You can choose whether to finish your dinner in the next five minutes and have a bedtime snack tonight, or you can choose to take longer to finish your dinner and not have a bedtime snack tonight." Either way, your child has to finish his dinner. If he finishes his dinner within five minutes, you can follow through by rewarding

good behavior with a bedtime snack. If he takes longer, you can follow through by punishing bad behavior and take away his bedtime snack.

DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

We would like to walk away after today's session with a strategy to help in our disciplining.

- **First, Identify difficult areas to discipline.**
Share examples.
- **Create a solution:** As a group develop a solution.
- **Practice:** If time allows, have two to three people role play the problem and solution
- **Review:** Is the solution addressing the need?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.
Our objectives were to:

1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

This week's commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Family Time		DISCIPLINE	

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what discipline means.
- Help children be aware of the importance of discipline.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says to parents about discipline.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says to children about discipline.

When God created you and placed you in your mother's womb, He was sending you to the earth for a very specific purpose. He placed special gifts inside of you that you would need to accomplish the assignment He has planned for you.

He was careful to make sure you were born into just the right family and given the parents that He wanted you to have. God gave you to your parents as a gift and a reward! Psalm 127:3 says, "Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him." God gave your parents the responsibility to provide for you, protect you, and love and nurture you. And, believe it or not, God says one of the most important ways parents show their love to their children is by disciplining them (Hebrews 12:8).

God is partnering with your parents so that you will grow up to be the man or woman He created you to be.

The meaning of the word discipline is to instill knowledge and skill. Discipline teaches children how to behave in a socially acceptable manner and how to make the right decisions and choices. Discipline isn't just about punishing children or grounding them. Instead, it keeps children on the right path in life. Discipline is to make sure children master the necessary life lessons that will cause them to lead a prosperous, peaceful, and productive life.

God is the perfect Father, and He says that He corrects us because He loves us. In Hebrews 12:6, it says, "The LORD disciplines

the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Then, in His Word, He tells parents to follow His example. In Proverbs 13:24, God says to parents, “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.”

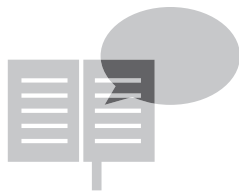
Although God gave you to your parents as a gift, you still ultimately belong to Him. God loves you, and in the Bible, He has given your parents instructions on how He wants you to be raised.

God has a significant plan for your life, and He wants you to live a life filled with love, abundance, happiness, and success. He knows that for you to attain these things, discipline is necessary.

God says we were all created for His pleasure. Revelations 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our LORD and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” It honors God and gives Him immense pleasure when we obey Him and choose to do the things He tells us to do in the Bible. And, it brings Him great joy when our obedience to our parents causes us to grow up and complete the tasks He sent us to earth to accomplish for Him.

In God’s Ten Commandments, found in Exodus Chapter 20, He made it clear that if we are to fulfill our purpose on earth and enjoy a blessed and rewarding life, there are some things He doesn’t want us to do. He also gave us instructions in the Bible on what it is He does want us to do. That is why God gave your parents the awesome responsibility to teach you the standards that God wants you to live by. In the Bible, parents are given a command about how God wants His children to be taught. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 29:17 goes on to tell parents, “Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.”

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalm 127:3

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Hebrews 12:6

The LORD disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.

Hebrews 12:8

If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

Proverbs 13:24

Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

Revelations 4:11

You are worthy, our LORD and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

Exodus Chapter 20

The Ten Commandments

It makes sense then that another meaning of the word discipline is “instruction given to a disciple.” God wants parents to train, discipline, and raise their children to be disciples of Christ Jesus. Then in Ephesians 6:1-3, God says, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Not only that, but you will achieve everything God has planned for your life. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” God has given you parents that will teach you and model for you the way that God wants you to live. When you honor them by being obedient, you also honor God, and He will cause you to live a blessed and long life.

DISCUSS

- Why is discipline important?
- What does the Bible tell us about God disciplining us, His children?
- What does the Bible tell parents about disciplining their children?
- When children obey their parents, what does God promise them?



Activities

ALL CHILDREN

Materials

White board or easel, erasable markers
Pencils, crayons, markers

Video ages 6-11

<https://youtu.be/YtGcEtcijIM>

Video ages 12-16

<https://youtu.be/xyoyzmEU7CY>

- Before you read the Bible verse, write these two questions on the board. Then ask children to listen carefully for the answer to these questions:

1. What can I do to make my life better?
2. What could I do to make my life worse?

- Then carefully read the key Bible verse:
Ephesians 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”
- After you finish reading, ask the children if they can answer the two questions.



Say: This is what we have been talking about today. Obedience is one of the ways you honor your parents.

Let’s look carefully at some parts of this verse.

- Honor your father and mother (meaning?). It’s more than just obeying but treating them like important people with love and respect.
- Commandment with a promise (meaning?). It’s the first of the Ten Commandments that comes with a specific promise from God—there is a reward if you do this right.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Proverbs 29:17

Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

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- It may go well with you (meaning?). God will help your life work out better, not perfect, but much better than it would be if you did not obey.
- Enjoy long life on the earth (meaning?). When God first said this, He was talking about the Promised Land, but how does it apply to us today?

Ask the children if they can answer the two questions now. Have them complete the “I Will Honor My Parents” worksheet. Have students share their plans if they would like to.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I HONOR MY PARENTS IN EVERY WAY?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>As I obey my parents, I am obeying the LORD.</i>

I WILL HONOR MY PARENTS

*"Children obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right."
Ephesians 6:1*



HERE ARE THE THINGS I WILL
DO TO HONOR MY FATHER

HERE ARE THE THINGS I WILL
DO TO HONOR MY MOTHER

Resources & Materials

- You tube: Karate Kid, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fULNUrOrvEc>
- Summary from Dr. Laura Luchies *"Discipline" Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures* (6th ed). Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing; 6 edition (January 1, 2015)
Language: English ISBN-10: 1305109392 ISBN-13: 978-1305109391
- *Behavior Modification: What It Is and How To Do It* (9th Edition) by Martin, Garry L., Pear, Joseph (2010) Paperback – 1600 by Garry L., Pear, Joseph Martin (Author) Publisher: Pearson, 2010; 9 edition (1600) ASIN: B00ZT25UNG

Adult Child Returns Home

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on how to handle when an adult child returns home.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Develop healthy boundaries with adult children.
2. Create six steps to SANITY.

During the past lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Parents and children can live together with respect and a plan for the future.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning what the Bible says about discipline.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


Introduction 5 minutes

 **Ask the children:** What do you want to be when you grow up?

Ask parents: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Ask the children: Where do you want to live when you grow up?

Ask children and parents: At what age are you grown up? In some places of the world, children never leave the house in which they were raised. In fact, as they get married, the family simply adds rooms on the house, making room for the married couple. Today, in our society, at a certain age, children move out of the house and get their own place to live. However, that is not always the case.

 **Ask:** How does this information compare to your family? Because of the change, we want to talk about what to do when your adult child returns home.

1. Develop healthy boundaries with adult children.
2. Create six steps to SANITY.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

Depending on the age of your children, discuss what they hope to do or become when they move out of the house.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
Family Time	ADULT CHILD RETURNS HOME

Adapted from Object Lessons for Every Occasion: (p. 82-83)
 What does it mean to “burn the candle at both ends?”

Light the candle on both ends; place the burning candle on a safe place.

What happens when both ends are lit?

You get used up.

What happens to the wax as the candle burns from both ends?

It drips and makes a mess.

Is there a holder for this type of candle?

No.

When you are incredibly busy, it feels like you are burning a candle on both ends.

Our scripture passage tonight is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It says, *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are*

to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Imagine this, your last child is off to college, and finally your house is quite empty without any children home.

You begin to find a new routine to your “free” lifestyle until one day when you get a text from your middle child. She is trying to save money for a house and would like to come back to your home and live. Or, your oldest discovers he has an illness and is no longer able to care for himself. What do you do?

All of the sudden, it can feel like you are burning the candle on both ends. You have your everyday work to accomplish, church

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activities, relationships, and small groups, but now you add caring for your adult child.

A few months ago, when all the children were gone, you developed a new rhythm of living. Now, it feels like you do not have a place to call your own—there is nowhere to get away. It's like a candle, burning on both ends, that does not have a firm place to stand.

It might surprise you, but this is happening to more and more families.

The way we live life today makes us incredibly busy. Today, we are going to focus on setting boundaries for when your adult child returns home. These boundaries are good for whether your adult child returns home for good reasons or because something has gone wrong.

Allison Bottke, author of *Setting Boundaries with Your Adult Children*, is a mom who had a child caught up in drugs. Through her years of experience with her son, she realized her part in contributing to the problem. Now don't misunderstand—her son made the choice to do drugs; her mistake was enabling him.

Enabling is when you do something for another that the other can do for himself or herself. For example, intervening so that the child does not experience the tough consequence of the mistake.

Another example of enabling would be when a parent comes to the rescue of a child by giving money for rent when the child has already spent money on other things. Bottke created **SANITY**, which helps us to remember steps we can take to create healthy boundaries.

S = Stop your own negative behavior.

A = Assemble a support group.

N = Nip excuses in the bud.

I = Implement rules and boundaries.

T = Trust your instincts.

Y = Yield everything to God.

Let's explain the steps more fully.

S = Stop your own negative behavior.

What this means is to stop intervening so that the child can face the natural consequences of mistakes.

It also means to stop ignoring your own issues.

Try to figure out why you keep coming to your child's rescue. Is it because:

- Some guilt for mistakes you made as a parent, so you need to compensate?
- You are trying to buy your child's love?
- You are trying to be loved more than the other parent?
- You were deprived as a child and do not want your child to experience the same?
- Lack of trust in God that He will help your child figure out a solution?

A = Assemble a support group.

Find a group that is going through similar issues or find a Christian counselor. When meeting with others, you will find similar circumstances and receive support to remain strong in your decisions.

N = Nip excuses in the bud.

Do not be swayed by lame excuses such as "It is not my fault" or "Things are different today."

I = Implement rules and boundaries.

It is not easy, but it is important for you to detach from someone else's problems. Also, you need to communicate your boundaries to your child through a contract. When we are finished with **SANITY**, we will look at the components of the plan.

T = Trust your instincts.

If your gut is telling you that something is not right, follow it.

Y = Yield everything to God.

As God is working in and through your life, trust that



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 13:24

Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

1 John 3:18

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Notes

He is also working through your child's life. If you keep "helping," you might be getting in the way of God's work in your child's life.

Note: As you work through these steps, allow time for discussion.

Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick wrote *You Never Stop Being a Parent*. Within the book, they provide examples for a contract that can be used between you and your child.

Expectations:

1. Explain how much time will be spent doing work around the house, school, or employment.
2. Create a goal for this stage of life (i.e. education/savings).
3. Everyone will be treated with respect.
4. Common courtesy will be practiced. Each will let the other know where you are and when you expect to be home.
5. No illegal activities allowed.
6. Financially contribute to the family expenses.
7. Be honest so that trust can develop.

Consequences:

1. Extra work around the house.
2. Fines.
3. Restitution.
4. Taking away cell phone, computer, car, etc.
5. If will not follow rules, you are choosing to no longer live at home.

What you will provide:

1. Clear expectations
2. Will not nag or scold
3. Biblical principles of peace keeping
4. Will not micromanage his life
5. Will listen
6. Will admit when wrong
7. Will assume the best
8. Will make home a place of joy and fun

As time allows, begin working through the contract.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Develop healthy boundaries with adult children.
2. Create six steps to SANITY.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Parents and children can live together with respect and a plan for the future.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16	40 minutes
Student Training	
<i>Family Time</i>	ADULT CHILD RETURNS HOME

Objectives

- Help children be aware of milestones of growing up.
- Help children be aware of what it means to be growing up.
- Help children be aware of what it means to be an adult.
- Help children be aware of the need to pray about their future.
- Help children be aware of what happens when an adult child returns home.

From the day children are born, their parents love them! They provide for their children and support them in every way possible. Christian parents realize that they are partnering with God to make sure their children grow up to become everything God created them to be.

In Proverbs 22:6, God says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Parents have been given a command from God to teach their children according to what the Bible teaches.

Parents are delighted and proud when their little ones reach and conquer each milestone they come to in life. One of

their first major achievements is attending and completing kindergarten! Later, they successfully complete elementary and middle school. All along life’s path, the child is growing up. That means the child is gradually learning to accept more and more responsibility. However, the Bible instruction the child is learning from the parents is most important. Critical lessons like learning to pray, to read the Bible, to attend church, and to worship and praise God will be the true deciding factor in the young adult’s success in life.

Then comes the next major accomplishment—graduating from high school. Parents, family members, and friends are overjoyed and celebrate this

momentous occasion with the child. Their young son or daughter is considered grown and has now reached what is called “adulthood.” For the young adult, it is time to put 1 Corinthians 13:11 into action, which says, “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.” By this time, hopefully, this young adult has established a strong relationship with God. In order to meet the challenges of being grown, God will need to be kept first in the young adult’s life.

Being an adult means being able to handle daily life responsibilities, and adults are not looking for others to bail them out when they find themselves in a tight spot. As adults, they are expected to be held accountable for their choices, decisions, and actions. They must also be able to provide for their basic needs and wants. Soon after graduation, it is time for them to move out of their parents’ home to live on their own and begin their new life of independence. This is a big step, but God reassures His young Christians in Jeremiah 29:11 with this promise: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” For many young adults headed for college, their new address will be their college dormitory. And for those who have decided not to go to college and have been hired into their first real job, they find the perfect apartment that will be their new living quarters.

In either case, proud parents with hope-filled hearts lend their support as they cheer their precious son or daughter on his or her way. Christian parents remind their adult child that Proverbs 16:3 says, “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.”

At home parents are beginning a new life of becoming parents to an adult. They love their adult child, and they realize that an important part of becoming an adult is moving out into the world. Parents back out of the picture and give their adult child more space. They need to be allowed to handle the pressures of being a grown up. Some newly

Notes

Notes

ousted sons and daughters may at first be a bit anxious but rapidly come to enjoy being their own commander.

Everyone is different. Some young adults have no problem moving into a meaningful and rewarding career that allows them to meet their financial responsibilities and provide for their upkeep. Others may need a bit more time to come out from under their parents' provision, restrictions, and protection. For most, the transition goes smoothly, and the adult child takes his rightful place in society.

As time passes, some adult children graduate from college and land the perfect job. Another marries and has a young family. All seems to be going well. But in some cases, the parents get a call from their adult child asking if they can move back home for a while. Something in their plan has not gone well. This is disappointing to the parents, but this is a perfect case where a parent's unconditional love is necessary. Although, the parents are disheartened about their adult child's return home, in most cases, the individual returning home is embarrassed and hurting. In times like these, Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds the adult child and parents to "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Adult children return home for many reasons. Some of the returnees have run out of funds to pay their college tuition, fees, and other costs. They need time to work and save some money to continue their studies. Others may be having difficulty finding the right job that pays enough to meet their monthly expenses. Still others may be facing personal problems such as illness, divorce, addiction, and more. Whatever the reason, as they pray about this unfortunate circumstance, the parents open their hearts and offer their home as a place of refuge to their adult child. Christian parents know that the Bible teaches us to not worry about anything, but instead to talk to God about our problem and ask for His help and guidance (Philippians 4:6).

Parents and adult children hope this situation never happens, but if it does, the best thing to do is to develop a plan where all people involved set fair, reasonable rules and discuss expectations. During this season, parents can use this time to establish a relationship with their grown-up child and get to know them as an adult. The good news is that adult children generally only return home for a short time. With God's help, most of them are soon confident and ready to move back out on their own and try again.

We don't always know why we experience disappointments or why things don't work out the way we plan, but God gives us this promise in Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." As long as we continue to love and trust God, all things—even things that cause us sadness and disappointment—will work for our good! Psalm 28:7 says, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." The key is seeking God and loving and trusting Him.

DISCUSS

- When is a child considered an adult?
- What are the new responsibilities of the adult child?
- Why are adult children expected to move out of their parents' home?
- When adult children move out of their parents' home, where do they live?
- Why do some adult children return home?
- What should parents and adult children do if the adult child returns home?

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Proverbs 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

Whiteboard or easel, with erasable markers
“My Plan For Success” worksheet
Pencils, crayons, markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube videos: (discuss briefly)

1. <https://youtu.be/kw-ABtfWC3U>
2. <https://youtu.be/hMs1YBOEjMY>

- Explain to the children that in some cases adult children may need to return home; however, that is not the best opportunity for success for an adult child. Tell them it is important to make a plan that helps them write a vision for their life and practice good habits that will help their vision become a reality. Then with God’s help, they will not be an adult child that needs to return home.
- As a group, fill in the blanks on the worksheet. Solicit ideas from the group. Have children agree, then write the responses on the board. Children can copy the answers from the board to fill in the blanks on their “My Plan for Success” worksheet. Children can add any other ideas to their plan that they like.
- Have children share their plan.

AGES 12-16

Materials

"My Plan For Success" worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube videos: (discuss briefly)

1. <https://youtu.be/kw-ABtfWC3U>
 2. <https://youtu.be/hMs1YBOEjMY>
- Explain to the children that in some cases adult children may need to return home; however, that is not the best opportunity for success for an adult child. Tell them it is important to make a plan that helps them write a vision for their life and practice good habits that will help their vision become a reality. Then with God's help, they will not be an adult child that needs to return home.
 - Guide children individually in filling out their "My Plan for Success" worksheet. As they fill it out, talk them through it. Walk around the room to encourage them. Notice what they are writing. Dialogue about it.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Psalms 28:7

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING THE THINGS I NEED TO DO TODAY
TO PLAN FOR TOMORROW?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God has great plans
for my life!*

Resources & Materials

- *When Our Grown Kids Disappoint Us: Letting Go of Their Problems, Loving Them Anyway, and Getting on with Our Lives*
—Jane Adams
- *You Never Stop Being a Parent: Thriving in Relationship With Your Adult Children*
—Elyse Fitzpatrick
- *How to Really Love Your Adult Child: Building a Healthy Relationship in a Changing World*
—Gary Chapman
- *Setting Boundaries® with Your Adult Children: Six Steps to Hope and Healing for Struggling Parents*
—Allison Bottke
- *Object Lessons for Every Occasion*
—Sheryl Bruinsma, Baker
- **Candle & Matches:** Pull the wick out of the bottom so that you can burn both ends (get permission to do this in your building).

MY PLAN FOR SUCCESS

"Commit your activities to the LORD, and your plans will be achieved." Proverbs 16:3

1. SCHOOL GOALS

2. HOME GOALS

3. SPIRITUAL GOALS

4. EXTRA-CURRICULAR GOALS

Organizing Your Family for Success

Dear Facilitator: This week's lesson is about organizing for success. Some people feel intimidated when they think of getting organized, and others thrive on schedules, routines, and planning. The goal of our lesson is to think about organization from a practical viewpoint of three categories: routines, events, and projects.

The lesson includes a diagram of these three categories. It illustrates how routines create stability, how events are opportunities that can be a blessing or a distraction, and how projects provide a way to change.

Most people will see themselves fitting in one area more strongly than others; however, the discussion and the activities are intended to show how specific tasks and activities fit best in different categories. One category is not better than the others, but each one serves a different purpose.

The lesson takes a biblical example from Luke 14:28-39 where Jesus tells a story to His followers and asks them to consider the cost of following Him. We apply that principle by asking families to consider their tasks and to plan to be successful.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help their family with stability and change.

continued


Notes

This week's statement is: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare this lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will come together in God's love and become a source for friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing and leading your family.

Last week, we talked about how to handle an adult child returning home.

 **Ask:** How did last week's lesson impact you or your family?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes to read our Family Commitment Statements out loud together. (Review previous commitment statements.)

Tonight, we are going to talk about routines, events, and projects and how each one of these has its place in organizing for success.

It's not always easy to stay organized, especially if you have young children, but by getting your "To Do" list items in the right category, you will be amazed at how stability and change can work together to keep you successfully organized.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Tonight's commitment statement is the second objective: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, talk about the following questions at your table.

1. What are some routines that your family follows?
2. What are some events that your family puts on the calendar?
3. What are some projects that you would like to get done?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Family Time

**ORGANIZING YOUR
FAMILY FOR SUCCESS**

Stability and change may seem like opposites, but they actually work together to help us be organized for success in our families.

We all need to develop habits to be successful. We need to be willing to change and grow as our circumstances change.

As we consider all we must accomplish in our lives, most fit in one of three categories: routines, events, and projects.

Tonight, we are going to define what we mean by these categories and work together in groups to think about how we get things done.

Our family commitment statement is: I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

Let's get started and see what this commitment means.

Tonight, let's take a minute to think about how God created the world in Genesis. It says that on each day, He did something

different. Notice how He didn't create the fish before He created the water! We find order and organization in God's creation!

In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus tells us a story and says, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'"

Jesus was talking to His followers and asking them to consider the cost of following Him. It's important for us as families to sit down and consider the things we must accomplish and make sure that we plan our lives so that we will be successful.

This evening we are going to talk about the difference between these categories, and what happens if we put the things we

must do in the wrong category. One category is not better than the others, and we need all three to be successful.

Most of you will see yourself stronger in one category than the others.

Discuss examples of routines, calendar items, or projects that you talked about with your family at dinner. (Facilitator be prepared to share some of your own examples.)

Let's talk about the three categories where our "To Do" list might fit.

Routines are important because they provide stability in our families so children and adults know what to expect. Some examples of routines are washing the dishes, doing the laundry, or going to school. These are generally less time consuming than events and projects, and take less energy, but it takes a lot of commitment to stick to the routine. When we know how much time we need for routines, we can better plan for the events and projects in our lives.

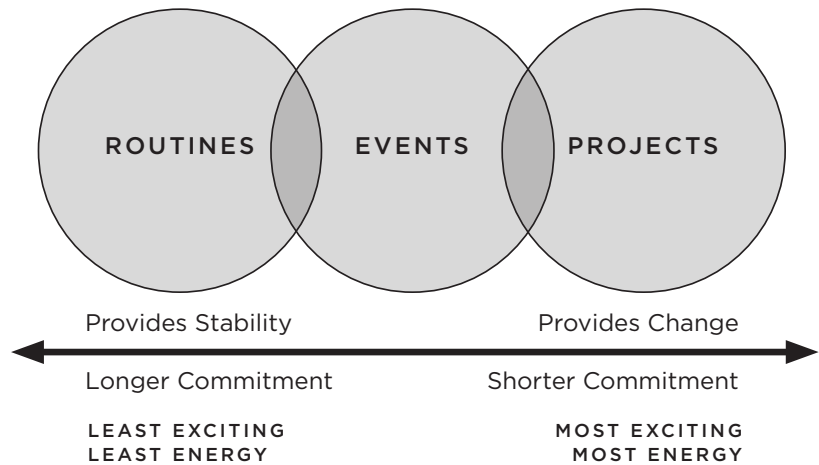
Events are occasions that we choose to attend. We make choices about events every day. Maybe it's attending a wedding, meeting friends, or going to church. These are often things we enjoy, but they don't usually take a lot of planning for us, just time. Events are important because they are opportunities for us to be a part of each other's lives. They can also be distractions if they take over our schedules. Events should be put on a calendar, so we don't forget them, and it's okay to say "no" sometimes. Events should usually be planed around routines.

Projects are important because they help us bring about changes in our families. Some examples of projects are spring cleaning or buying a new car. They are usually the most exciting and take the most energy and planning. Generally, people are excited about starting a project or something new, but a lot of time can be involved in starting and completing project. It is often important to make changes, not just for the sake of change, but because our life circumstances and needs change.

Notes

Notes

The diagram on your handout (take home) gives you a better idea of the differences between routines, events, and projects as we consider them in our family's organization.



Most of you will see yourself in one or more of these circles. One category is not better than the other; we should put items from our "To Do" list in all three categories. The problem comes when we put our "To Dos" in the wrong categories.

For example, what would happen if you decided that dinner time was a project? You would decide on a great meal, go get everything you need, cook all day, and make a huge mess! The outcome would likely be very exciting and fun, especially if you were with friends or family, but it would also take a lot of energy.

How likely would you be to repeat that every day?

You might decide it's too much work and only fix dinner occasionally. The outcome of that decision might not make others in your family very happy.

Or, if you decide to be out every night after work with friends or attend events, you might have a lot of fun, but you have decided to make those activities your regular routine, and you probably won't have much time for things like cleaning the house or paying the bills.

The choice to invest in your friends has taken over your life, and you could soon be quite disorganized.

Share a story about routine.

1. What category do you prefer? Routines, events, or projects, and why?
2. Why types of tasks do you sometimes miss getting done? When?
3. What are some items you would recommend for each category? Why?

We are going to organize our tasks into four specific areas.

(Divide into groups of three to four and take some time to work together on organizing lists and deciding if they fall into the category of routines, events, or projects.)

ACTIVITY

Worksheet

List how you would handle them now with an R (routines), E (events), or P (projects), and how you think you might want to handle them in the future (R, E, or P).

- **Self-care:** rest, exercise, etc.
- **Family Care:** eating, cleaning, etc.
- **Obligations & Activities:** Work, school, sports, etc.
- **Care for Possession:** our house, apartment, car etc.

DISCUSS

- What are some things that happen in your life that keep you from being organized?

Everyone can have a simple system of organization by categorizing your “To Do” list under routines, events, and projects.

Take the things that you should do every day or week to have stability and develop a routine.

Make sure that events are on a family calendar.



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the LORD, not for human masters.

Luke 14:28 says

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?

1 Corinthians 14:40

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Notes

If there are projects that you would like to do, or need to do for a healthy change, then plan time and go for it.

Last of all, if you find you need help, find a partner to help you figure out how to get things done.

Remember, it's important for us as families to sit down and consider what we have to accomplish and make sure that we plan our lives so that we will be successful.

Our family commitment statement tonight is:
I commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. State the difference between routines, events, and projects.
2. Commit to maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects to help my family with stability and change.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

**ORGANIZING YOUR
FAMILY FOR SUCCESS**

Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance of family organizing.
- Help children to be aware of the three key areas of family organizing.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family routines.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family events.
- Help children to be aware of the importance of family projects.

Organizing is a skill that is learned over time. When families are organized, it makes family life more orderly, focused, enjoyable, and meaningful. Parents are the leaders in organizing your family to be the best it can be, but they will need all family members to do their part to make it happen (Proverbs 21:5). We are going to talk about three different areas where organizing is important for families: routines, events, and projects.

Routines are an important part of family organization and are helpful for all families. Routines are completing daily tasks in your home and can cause your family bonds to grow stronger. Every family has routines that are unique and work for them. Routines let family members know who is responsible to do what,

when, and how often. Having routine job assignments in a family helps you learn to be responsible. Some examples of daily routines are getting ready in the morning, doing homework, setting the table for mealtimes, cleaning the dishes, getting ready for bedtime, and reading a bedtime story. Weekly routines may include tasks like housework, grocery shopping, and laundry. Routines help everything run more smoothly, and therefore, routines help families get along better with each other (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Routines serve many good purposes. Your job is to follow the instruction of your parents and do your very best with whatever tasks they assign to you. Remember the Bible says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as

working for the LORD, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23). So, when we’re talking about routines, the best gift you can give your parents is to pay attention, listen to their instruction, and obey. And the best gift you can give to your family is to do your part with a positive attitude.

Next, let’s talk about events. Events are occasions or various places that family members choose to go. Family events give you an opportunity to spend time with friends and get to know other people who are not members of your close family. Often, these activities or invitations are placed on a calendar and looked forward to by parents as well as the children in the family. We all know the excitement of waiting to go to the circus, a friend’s birthday party, or a concert by our favorite group! Whether it’s the circus, a birthday party, concert, wedding, baby shower, family reunion, or church, events are an important ingredient for parents to include in organizing for a successful family.

Although events can be interesting and enjoyable, there are events that can be unpleasant and even painful. Events such as attending a funeral, visiting someone in a hospital, or making a trip to the dentist can be sad and difficult. It is wise for parents to make sure we don’t put too many events on our calendar at the same time. Too many events scheduled at the same time can put stress on family members and cause problems. And as for you, make sure you have completed your everyday routine responsibilities so that you will be ready to participate in and enjoy the fun, special events your parents make possible for you.

Finally, we will look at the role projects play in organizing for success. A few weeks ago, we learned about the importance of families having dreams and desires. These dreams and desires will cause the family to have goals, and goals lead to family projects. Family projects are important because they bring about change in a family and help the family plan for the future. As parents make plans to help your family reach their goals

and make their dreams come true, many times they will involve the family in a project that they feel will be good for the family.

Projects can be exciting, but they also can take a lot of time and preparation (Luke 14:28). Some examples of projects could be buying a new car, saving to buy a new home, planning a family vacation, starting a healthy eating plan for the family, or so many other things. Sometimes parents may let you and your siblings take part in certain projects. This is good because it brings family members together as they spend time talking and planning for the project. They can have discussions about when the project will start, how it will be paid for, and roles and responsibilities of each family member to complete the project (1 Corinthians 14:40). This helps each member feel the importance of the family and that they are a valuable family member.

The goal of family organization must always be to create a home environment that will strengthen our relationship with God, our family members, and others. It is not always easy, but your parents are responsible for balancing the three key areas in getting your family organized: routines, events, and projects. When your parents are making sure that your family is doing their best to include and balance these, your family will be organizing for success.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what it means to be organized.
- Lead children in a discussion about the benefits of a family being organized.
- Lead children in a discussion about routines, events, and projects and how they help a family organize for success.

Notes

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Paper

Pencils or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/yae0uwNJd4I>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Ask children to list their morning routine activities in order. If they don't have a morning routine, have them create one. Have them share with the group if they would like to. For instance:
 1. I wake up.
 2. I brush my teeth.
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- Review and discuss how routines help our family stay organized.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Paper

Pencils or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/yaeOuwNJd4I>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Divide children into small groups and ask them to develop a skit to demonstrate a family where some of the family members are NOT being responsible to do their part to keep family routines running smoothly.
- Next, have the children do a skit to demonstrate a family where everyone IS being responsible to do their part to keep family routines running smoothly.
- Discuss why it is important for everyone in the family to work together to help the family organize for success.

Notes




CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR
FAMILY ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I live this day with order; I help my parents keep our family organized!</i>

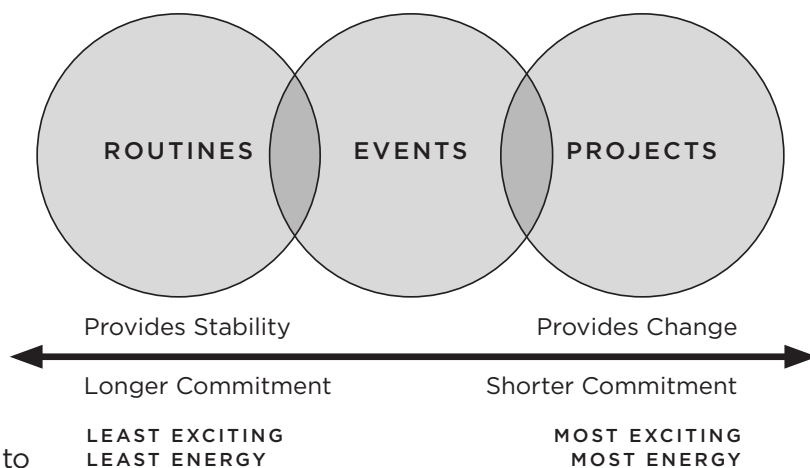
Worksheet

ORGANIZING YOUR FAMILY FOR SUCCESS

Directions:

- Work with your partner or group to make a list of “to do” items under each category.
- In the first small column put R (routines), E (events), or P (projects) to show what you do now.
- In the second small column put R (routines), E (events), or P (projects) to show if you think it should be changed.

Differences between routines, events, and projects as we consider them in our family's organization.



SELF CARE		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

FAMILY CARE		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

OPPORTUNITIES & ACTIVITIES		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

POSSESSIONS		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Elder Care

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on caring for the elderly population.

In the Bible, Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.” Ephesians 6:2-3 says, “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Exodus 20:12 says “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” Honoring your father and mother is being respectful in word and action and having an inward attitude of esteem for their position. The Greek word for honor means “to revere, prize, and value.” Honor is giving respect not only for merit but also for rank. For example, some Americans may disagree with the president’s decisions, but they should still respect his position as leader of their country. Similarly, children of all ages should honor their parents, regardless of whether their parents “deserve” honor.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:


1. Explain why one should care for the elderly.
2. Develop a strategy to honor the elderly.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: Caring for the elderly honors God.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.


Last week we talked about how to set up our families for success by maintaining routines, scheduling events, and planning projects.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

This week we are going to focus on caring for the elderly population. Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.” Ephesians 6:2-3 says, “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

The Greek word for honor means “to revere, prize, and value.” Honor is giving respect not only for merit but also for rank. For example, some Americans may disagree with the president’s decisions, but they should still respect his position as leader of their country. Similarly, children of all ages should honor their parents, regardless of whether their parents “deserve” honor.

 **Say:** Fragile vase. How do I carry it? What can I do to make sure that it is cared for? What happens if I drop it? As it gets older, do I need to be careful?

Today’s teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain why one should care for the elderly.
2. Develop a strategy to honor the elderly.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Caring for the elderly honors God.

Notes

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: Tonight, at your tables, let's talk about what it means to honor and respect others.

1. How do you show honor and respect to people?
2. What do you do or not do?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Family Time</i>	ELDER CARE

Did you know that in 1900, men and women were only expected to live up to their forties? Through advanced technology and medical discoveries, the life expectancy for most people has increased immensely.

In the United States, the 2017 life expectancy for men is now 76.5 years and 81.2 years for women. This is extremely good news, but with it also comes concerns. As many get older they face new health complications and sometimes crippling illnesses that cause them to not be able to safely live on their own.

Though many seniors don't want to accept it, the older they get, they begin to need help with things in their daily living that they used to have no trouble doing when they were younger such as driving, shopping, cooking, laundry, cleaning, and paying the bills.

When this happens, it creates challenges for everyone in the family. Romans 15:1 says, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves."

What have you experienced or observed with the elderly?

What has worked well for you and your family?

What has been the most difficult?

What are some reasons from the Bible that show we are to care for the elderly? (Feel free to make use of the suggested scripture passages noted earlier).

It is not always easy to care for the elderly. From Virginia Morris's book, *How to Care for Aging Parents*, here are some signs that parents need help:

- Parent is unsteady, has difficulties getting in and out of chairs, or has fallen.
- Hygiene is not practiced.
- Parent has either gained or lost weight.
- House and yard are not maintained.
- Personality has changed.
- Nothing to eat or food is spoiled.
- Mail unopened and bills not paid.
- Missing appointments.
- Getting lost.
- Stops doing things he/she used to enjoy.
- Driving no longer seems safe.
- Mail is full of new subscriptions, sweepstakes entries, or requests for donations (p.3).

Within the book, Morris offers advice on numerous topics such as caring for yourself, how to talk to your parent, medicine, paperwork, moving out of the home, dementia, the last goodbye, and more. A book or similar resources can give support to you as you care for your elderly parent.

Morris also provides numerous websites. The top ten are:

- Eldercare Locator: eldercare.gov
- National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center: ltcombudsman.org
- AARP: aarp.org
- Family Caregiver Alliance: caregiver.org
- Benefits Check Up: benefitscheckup.org
- Medicaid: Medicaid.gov
- Medicare: Medicare.gov
- Alzheimer's Association: alz.org
- National SHIP Resource Center: shiptalk.org
- Caring Connections: caringinfo.org

DISCUSS

What resources have you used to help in caring for the elderly?

Notes

Notes

Joy Loverde has also provided some excellent resources in her book, *The Complete Eldercare Planner*. She also provides resources at her website: www.elderindustry.com/11315.html.

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

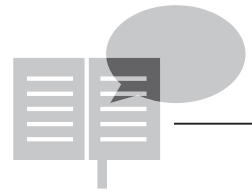
Today's teaching objectives were to:

1. Explain why one should care for the elderly.
2. Develop a strategy to honor the elderly.

This week's commitment statement is: Caring for the elderly honors God.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Proverbs 30:17

The eye that mocks a father, that scorns an aged mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.

Matthew 15:4

For God said, “Honor your father and mother” and “Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.”

Romans 15:1

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Matthew 25:40

The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Leviticus 19:32

Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.

Job 12:12

Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?

Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

ELDER CARE

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what elder care means.
- Help children understand why elder care is a challenge.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible teaches us about caring for the elderly.
- Help children be aware of ways they can help their elderly loved one.

Did you know that in 1900, men and women were only expected to live to be in their forties? Now, however, through advanced technology and breakthrough medical discoveries, the life expectancy for most people has increased immensely. In the United States, the 2017 life expectancy for men is now 76.5 years and 81.2 years for women. Yes, thanks to life-prolonging medical advancements, people are living longer than ever! This is extremely good news, but with it also comes concerns. People are living longer, and those who are fortunate enough to be given the gift of longevity want to maintain their ability to

care for themselves and live on their own if they can.

However, as many get older, they may face new health complications and sometime crippling illnesses that cause them to not be able to continue to safely live without assistance. Though many seniors don't want to accept it, the older they get, they may begin to need help with things in their daily living that they used to have no trouble doing when they were younger such as driving, shopping, cooking, laundry, cleaning, keeping track of appointments, and even paying bills.

When aging loved ones can no longer manage on their own, it creates challenges for everyone in the family. It is extremely difficult for elderly family members to give up their independence and begin to depend on others to help them. The family must figure out the best way to assist and support their elderly loved ones while helping them maintain their dignity and comfort as much as possible. Romans 15:1 says, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves."

More families than ever are having to provide care for elderly family members. As Christians, we have been given some directions in the Bible for how we should care for our elderly family members. Just as Jesus is full of compassion, He wants us to show compassion to others. Colossians 3:12 says, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." We will need to remember that Scripture as we take care of those who need our loving care.

Acts 20:35 tells us that we "must help the weak." So, let us look at how as children you can do this. Sometimes elderly family members need so much medical attention that it is unsafe for them to remain home. In this case, they are better cared for in a medical nursing facility. Here, they will receive regular monitoring and daily scheduled medical care. If your elderly loved one is in a nursing facility, there are things you can do to help them be content and at peace in their new home.

The first thing you can do is pray for them. When you say your prayers, be sure and ask God to heal and restore them and to strengthen them and protect them. Next, younger children can visit them with parents as often as possible, and as you get older, you can visit on your own. Nothing puts a smile on the face of a grandma or grandpa like a visit from their precious grandchildren. Every now and then you can read the Bible to them, draw them a lovely picture, make them a card, or write them a sweet letter telling them you love them and how special they are to you.

Notes

Maybe they would like for you to come and have dinner with them or join them in watching one of their favorite TV shows. Don't forget they especially love your warm hugs and sweet kisses.

When children visit a nursing facility, it blesses every person there. Even some patients who may be hard to get along with have a big smile on their faces when children come to visit. So even though you are a child, you have the power to make your elderly loved one and many others feel better! Proverbs 17:22 says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine."

Maybe your elderly loved one doesn't need to be in a nursing facility, but your parents decided that grandma or grandpa would be safer living at your home with your family. That is a special opportunity for you to be a blessing to them! As always, pray for them, and look for things you can do to make things easier for them. You can help them do many simple tasks. For instance, you can give them a massage, you can help them comb their hair, you can help them tie their shoe laces, you can bring them a glass of water or juice, or you can fix them a snack. They would also still love for you to draw them a picture, make them a card, or write them a letter, but more than anything, they treasure your sweet hugs and kisses. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." So, when you care for your elderly loved one in any way, Jesus says you are really caring for Him. And just as you bring a smile to your loved one's face, you bring a big smile to Jesus's face too!

DISCUSS

- What challenges can longer life cause?
- As Christians, how should we care for aging family members?
- Why do some elderly family members need to live at a medical nursing facility?
- What are some ways you can support your elderly loved ones?
- How can you serve your family members living in your home?
- In Matthew 25:40, what did Jesus say about serving the least of these?



Scripture SUPPORT

Romans 15:1

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine.

Matthew 25:40

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Notes



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

Tribute forms
Paper
Crayons or markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/e82PvkoJxA>
(discuss briefly).

- Tell children they are going to give a tribute to an elderly loved one in their family.
- Tell them a tribute is a gift of compliments to the person, given in gratitude. As a group, have children suggest compliments to give their elderly loved ones (things you love about them, things they taught you, or how much you love them and appreciate them).
- Write their suggestions on the whiteboard. Give a few examples to get them started. Have them copy the ones from the board. Then, guide them in filling out the “Special Tribute” form, adding their own personal compliments specific to their loved one. Finally, have them sign and date the tribute.
- When they are finished, have children share who their tribute is for and some of the compliments they wrote about. (Have extra copies available in case a child wants to give more than one).
- Tell the children they are to read the tribute to their loved one and then present it to them along with a hug!

AGES 12-16

Materials

Tribute forms

Paper

Crayons or markers

After lesson discussion, have children view

YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/e82PvkoJxA>

(discuss briefly).

- Tell children they are going to honor an elderly loved one by giving them a tribute.
- Tell them a tribute is a gift of compliments to the person, given in gratitude. It is a written proclamation of your love for them. It tells them things you love about them and things they taught you.
- Solicit thoughts from the older children to get their thoughts flowing. Guide them in filling out the “Special Tribute” form, adding their own personal compliments specific to their loved one. Then have them sign and date the tribute.
- When they are finished, have the children share who their tribute is for and some of the compliments they wrote about. (Have extra copies available in case a child wants to give more than one.)
- Tell the children they are to read the tribute to their loved one and then present it to them along with a hug!

*Have older children read their tribute and demonstrate how the tribute is to be read and presented.

Notes




CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A ELDERLY
LOVED ONE FEEL LOVED?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I honor the elderly people in my life.</i>

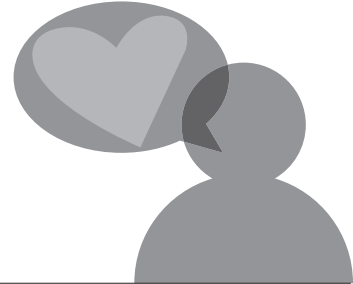
Resources & Materials

- Old vase or something fragile.
- *How to Care for Aging Parents, 3rd Edition: A One-Stop Resource for All Your Medical, Financial, Housing, and Emotional Issues*
— Virginia Morris
- *Coping With Your Difficult Older Parent: A Guide for Stressed-Out Children*
— Grace Lebow
- *The Complete Eldercare Planner, Revised and Updated Edition: Where to Start, Which Questions to Ask, and How to Find Help*
— Joy Loverde

SPECIAL TRIBUTE

"They shall still bring forth the fruit in old age;
they shall be vigorous and flourishing"

Psalm 92:14



THIS TRIBUTE IS GIVEN TO

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is a small dark rectangular mark at the top right corner, possibly a staple or a piece of tape. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused notebook page.

SIGNED _____

DATE PRESENTED _____

Love Languages

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on different ways in which people experience and show love. The ways people experience and show love are called love languages. We know that God loves us. Because He loves us, we can love others. The Bible says, in 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.”

There used to be an old song that I sang with my children called “We Love Because God First Loved Us.” If you want to hear it, you can find it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4HT8aXz2W4>.

How can we show love to children so that they know and feel loved? We can do so through an understanding of Gary Chapman’s five love languages.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain five love languages.
2. Identify each family member’s love language.


During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: We know that God loves us. Because He loves us, we can love others.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.


Blessings

Notes


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about caring for and honoring the elderly.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** What is this (hold up a pinwheel)?

What happens when I blow on it?

Can you see the air that I am blowing?

God's love for us can be like the air that blows a pinwheel. You cannot see the wind, but you know it is moving because the pinwheel moves. You cannot see it, but you can feel the air. God is all around us. Even if we cannot see Him, we know that God loves us.

If time allows, each person should make a pinwheel. Every time it spins, they will be reminded that God loves them.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain five love languages.
2. Identify each family member's love language.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: We know that God loves us. Because He loves us, we can love others.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: As you enjoy your dinner, please discuss the following questions:

1. When you love someone, how do you show it?
2. When you are loved by someone, how do you like to experience love?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes



Have participants share what they learned over Family & Table Talk on how they have shown or experienced love.

Gary Chapman is an author and director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc. He developed “love languages.” Chapman writes: “He sends you flowers when what you really want is time to talk. She gives you a hug when what you really need is a home-cooked meal. The problem isn’t your love—it’s your love language!”

LOVE LANGUAGES

<http://www.crccapetown.co.za/uploads/files/282f25cf1445862083.pdf>

1. Words of Affirmation

Actions don’t always speak louder than words. If this is your love language, unsolicited compliments mean the world to you. Hearing the words, “I love you,” are important—hearing the reasons behind that love sends your spirits skyward. Insults can leave you shattered and are not easily forgotten.

2. Quality Time

For those whose love language is spoken with Quality Time, nothing says, “I love you,” like full, undivided attention. Being there for this type of person is critical, but really being there—with the TV off, fork and knife down, and all chores and tasks on standby—makes your significant other feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful.

3. Receiving Gifts

Don't mistake this love language for materialism. The receiver of gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift.

If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous—so would the absence of everyday gestures.

4. Acts of Service

Can vacuuming the floors really be an expression of love? Absolutely! Anything you do to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an "Acts of Service" person will speak volumes. The words he or she most want to hear: "Let me do that for you." Laziness, broken commitments, and making more work for them tell speakers of this language their feelings don't matter.

5. Physical Touch

This language isn't all about the bedroom. A person whose primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy. Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face—they can all be ways to show excitement, concern, care, and love. Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be unforgivable and destructive.

Take the quiz (found in appendix), answering the questions from your perspective.

What did you learn?

Take the quiz as if you were one of your children. Do the same for each member of your family.

Notes

What did you learn?

List your family members and the identified love languages. Next to each member's name, note ways in which you can fulfill the love language.

HOMEWORK

While each attempted to take the love language quiz from a child's perspective, have each member in your family take the quiz (as age-appropriate).

DISCUSS

How can each family member better help fulfill another's love language?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.
Our objectives were to:

1. Explain five love languages.
2. Identify each family member's love language.

Today's commitment statement is: We know that God loves us. Because He loves us, we can love others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

The Five Love Languages Test

by Dr. Gary Chapman

Read each pair of statements and circle the one that best describes you.

1. A. I like to receive notes of affirmation from you.
E. I like it when you hug me.
2. B. I like to spend one-on-one time with you.
D. I feel loved when you give me practical help.
3. C. I like it when you give me gifts.
B. I like taking long walks with you.
4. D. I feel loved when you do things to help me.
E. I feel loved when you hug or touch me.
5. E. I feel loved when you hold me in your arms.
C. I feel loved when I receive a gift from you.
6. B. I like to go places with you.
E. I like to hold hands with you.
7. A. I feel loved when you acknowledge me.
C. Visible symbols of love (gifts) are very important to me.
8. E. I like to sit close to you.
A. I like it when you tell me that I am attractive.
9. B. I like to spend time with you.
C. I like to receive little gifts from you.
10. D. I know you love me when you help me.
A. Your words of acceptance are important to me.
11. B. I like to be together when we do things.
A. I like the kind words you say to me.
12. E. I feel whole when we hug.
D. What you do affects me more than what you say.
13. A. I value your praise and try to avoid your criticism.
C. Several inexpensive gifts mean more to me than one large expensive gift.
14. E. I feel closer to you when you touch me.
B. I feel close when we are talking or doing something together.
15. A. I like you to compliment my achievements.
D. I know you love me when you do things for me that you don't enjoy doing.
16. E. I like for you to touch me when you walk by.
B. I like when you listen to me sympathetically.

<https://m2mbatesville.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/lovelanguagetest.pdf>

Continued. **The Five Love Languages Test**

17. C. I really enjoy receiving gifts from you.
D. I feel loved when you help me with my home projects.
18. A. I like when you compliment my appearance.
B. I feel loved when you take the time to understand my feelings.
19. E. I feel secure when you are touching me.
D. Your acts of service make me feel loved.
20. D. I appreciate the many things you do for me.
C. I like receiving gifts that you make.
21. B. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you give me your undivided attention.
D. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you do some act of service for me.
22. C. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with a gift.
A. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with meaningful words
(written or spoken).
23. D. I feel loved when you help me out with my chores.
C. I know you are thinking of me when you give me a gift.
24. C. I appreciate it when you remember special days with a gift.
B. I appreciate it when you listen patiently and don't interrupt me.
25. B. I enjoy extended trips with you.
D. I like to know that you are concerned enough to help me with my daily task.
26. E. Kissing me unexpectedly makes me feel loved.
C. Giving me a gift for no occasion makes me feel loved.
27. A. I like to be told that you appreciate me.
B. I like for you to look at me when we are talking.
28. C. Your gifts are always special to me.
E. I feel loved when you kiss me.
29. A. I feel loved when you tell me how much you appreciate me.
D. I feel loved when you enthusiastically do a task I have requested.
30. E. I need to be hugged by you every day.
A. I need your words of affirmation daily.

Add Total Number of Answers Here:

A._____ Words of Affirmation **B.**_____ Quality Time **C.**_____ Receiving Gifts
D._____ Acts of Service **E.**_____ Physical Touch

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

LOVE LANGUAGES

Objectives

- Help children be aware that everyone has a different way that love is communicated to them.
- Help children be aware of the five love languages.
- Help children be aware of the characteristics of each of the five love languages.
- Help children be aware that Jesus expressed His love to us through all five love languages.

When we hear of the word language, we usually think of a method of human communication either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words. More simply put, language is what we use to express our ideas, feelings, and thoughts to others. But there is another form of language that we are going to talk about today that might surprise you. We are going to learn about the five love languages.

Did you know that you and everyone else has a specific love language that is important to them? Yes, every adult, teenager, and even child five and above have a specific love language—certain

behaviors that communicate love to you. Even though we may enjoy bits and pieces of all five of the love languages, there will be one that suits each person best. Let's see if you can discover which love language speaks to you.

The first love language is **Words of Affirmation**. These people enjoy it when someone expresses their love to them through words. Words of recognition and praise affirm and encourage them and make them feel loved. If this is your love language, you really appreciate someone giving you compliments and speaking words of affection to you. The Bible tells us that

words are powerful. Proverbs 16:24 says, “Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” When you hear the words, “I love you” or “I am so proud of you” followed by the reasons why, it means so much to you and truly makes you happy. Although this may be your love language, make sure to see if there are others in your life who speak the same love language. When you figure out who they are, be sure to let them know you love and care for them by writing them a special note or speaking affirming words to bless them. God speaks words of affirmation to us throughout the Bible. First John 3:1 says, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

The next love language is **Quality Time**. Spending quality time with these people is the way to their heart. Giving them your time and undivided attention is the same as saying, “I love you.” Being together, whether baking cupcakes or shooting baskets or washing the car or taking a long walk and talking over the day’s events are ways you demonstrate love to them. Enjoyable conversations with plenty of eye contact make all the difference in the world to those who love through spending quality time. Also, when parents spend quality time with their children and show their love for them by listening, instructing, and modeling the way of the LORD, their lives will be impacted in a powerful way. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” God wants us to spend quality time with Him through prayer and reading His Word. James 4:8 says, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” In John 15:4-7, He tells us that if we remain in Him, He will remain in us. He says if we stay close to Him, we can pray to Him, and He will answer our prayers.

The third love language is **Receiving Gifts**. Perhaps you appreciate love being expressed to you through gifts. People who like to receive gifts as an expression of love are delighted by the thoughtfulness, care, and love put into giving them a gift. When a person takes the time to search for the

perfect gift, it demonstrates that they were thinking about you and that they truly know you and the things that please you. They are letting you know that you are so important to them that they spent their time, effort, and money to bless you with a gift. To people whose love language is receiving gifts, that equals love. God gives us an example of gift giving in Genesis 33:10-11 where Jacob gives a gift to his brother, Esau. The Bible lets us know that God believes in giving gifts! He gave us the greatest gift of all when He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. In John 3:16, it says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Because of this gift, we will live forever with God!

Acts of Service is the fourth language of love. If this is a person's love language, then mopping the floors, cooking dinner, or running an errand for them is an expression of love. You can show your love for them by massaging their shoulders or running bathwater for them to take a warm, relaxing bubble bath. How about taking the trash out for your brother who comes home late from basketball practice? This would be a way to express your love for him if this is his love language. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." When you ask a person whose love language is acts of service what you can do to help them, they feel loved. Even Jesus expressed His love through acts of service, for Matthew 20:28 says, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The final love language is **Physical Touch**. If you are a person who likes to cuddle and give and receive hugs, then more than likely your love language is physical touch. Touch is powerful! In the Bible, touch was used to heal and to bless! Jesus was a hugger and a toucher too! Mark 10:16 tells us that when people brought their children to Jesus, "He took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them." Throughout Jesus's ministry on earth,



Scripture SUPPORT

Proverbs 16:24

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

John 15:7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Genesis 33:10

“No, please!” said Jacob. “If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably.”

He touched many, and everyone He touched was healed and made whole. Today Jesus expresses His love for us by loving us unconditionally and touching us with His Holy Spirit!

No matter which love language you relate to, they all need to be built on a foundation of unconditional love. Unconditional love means caring about the happiness of another person without putting any demands on them and loving them no matter what. God loves us that way. Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Now that’s unconditional love! Letting a friend or loved one know that you love them just the way they are means more than anything! And when you love a person unconditionally, your message of love will be understood no matter what love language they speak.

DISCUSS

- What does a love language mean?
- What are the five love languages?
- Describe each love language.
- What kind of love is necessary no matter what a person’s love language is?



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

8.5 x 11 paper or tag board
Pencils, crayons, or markers

After the lesson discussion, have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/4GaFBJrSFel> (discuss briefly).
If not possible, do activity without video.

- Guide children in discussion of which love language suits them. Once they have decided on their love language, have them write it in big letters on paper or tag board. Have them decorate the border of the paper or tag board.
- Have students stand and share which love language they decided was theirs and why.
- Use iPad to videotape children. Replay for their enjoyment.

AGES 12-16

After lesson discussion, have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/4GaFBJrSFel> (discuss briefly).
If not possible, do activity without video.

- Guide children in discussion of which love language suits them. Tell children not to tell anyone what love language is theirs. Have each child act out a charade to express what their love language is. See if the other children can guess which love language they have chosen.

*Charades is a game in which participants act out an idea or phrase with no talking for others to try to guess what they are communicating.



Scripture SUPPORT

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Matthew 20:28

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:16

He took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Romans 5:8

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



CHALLENGE

I AM LEARNING TO GIVE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
TO MY FAMILY MEMBERS.

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*Jesus loves me
unconditionally!*

Chronic Illness

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on understanding chronic illness.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. See God's presence in the midst of illness.
2. Identify ways to serve God through chronic illness.
3. Find ways to help others who struggle with chronic illness.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings



Scripture SUPPORT

Book of Job

John 9

Ephesians 1:3-14

Psalm 16:2,5

I say to the LORD, "You are my LORD; apart from you I have no good thing.

LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

Psalm 73:25-26

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalm 142:5

I cry to you, LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.

Welcome 5 minutes

Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time focusing on the five love languages and learning how each family member experiences and shows love.

Ask: Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

Ask: When you get a cold or the flu, how do you feel? If people are available to help, what kind of help do you appreciate?

Say: Typically, after a few days of a cold or flu, our bodies heal, and we return to our normal activities.

Today, we are going to learn about ways to help those who are sick for longer periods of time.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. See God's presence in the midst of illness.
2. Identify ways to serve God through chronic illness.
3. Find ways to help others who struggle with chronic illness.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

Say: As you enjoy your dinner, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you do for someone who is sick or hurt?
2. Why do you do what you do?

After meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Because of sin, our bodies no longer work as they should. Bodies continue to break down, as one gets older.

When Jesus walked this earth, people believed that if someone was born with a defect, it was because one of the parents committed sin.

While sickness does result from sin, a parent cannot typically be blamed for causing a birth defect.

Read John 9 and hear Jesus's response.

John 9:1-12

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming,

when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

¹⁰ "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

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¹¹ He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

¹² “Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

If we had time to continue reading, we would see how the Pharisees used this man’s healing to put Jesus to the test.

What was Jesus’s response to his disciples?

John 9:3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Living in chronic pain—pain that does not go away—cannot easily be defined. Esther Smith, a woman who has had chronic pain for many years, wrote *When Chronic Pain & Illness Take Everything Away: How to Mourn our Losses*. In her book, she writes, “...The experience of unrelenting and debilitating pain feels impossible to explain. Chronic pain doesn’t take one or two or three things away. Many times, we lose our first dream our second dream our third dream, and most of the ones that follow” (2016, p.5).

Another author, Kimberly Rae, wrote *Sick and Tired: Empathy, Encouragement, and Practical Help for Those Suffering from Chronic Health Problems*. She describes how it can be difficult when one is sick but, on the outside, looks perfectly healthy. Kimberly felt that people were judging her and thinking she was a hypochondriac.

Chronic pain is more common than one thinks. In the United States, 100 million adults experience moderate or severe chronic pain according to Gaskin and Richard (as cited in Smith 2016).

Think about how Job handled his grief and pain. Job called out to God (Job 7:11). Some people are afraid to cry out to God, giving God our deepest and most raw emotions.

While going through such dark times, we do not always get the response or explanation we want back from God.

With Job, after all his friends sat with him and gave him horrible counsel, Job realizes, “Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.” He realized that God is bigger than he could imagine.

How do you handle suffering?

Some try to distract themselves. While it might work for a while, it never continues to work. It is never easy to understand God’s purpose in the midst of suffering.

Esther Smith writes, “As I purposefully approached God, He began to change my heart. He began to give me a desire to trust him. I still cry, but it no longer overcomes me” (p. 20).

Esther Smith provides helpful suggestions to help us through the process of grief over chronic pain.

1. The story needs to be told either to a friend, counselor, journal, others, or through art.
2. Identify a way to grieve such as writing a letter to your pain, spending time in nature, acknowledge anniversaries and milestones (both good and bad), creating a visual of what you would like to be in the midst of pain, creating a reverse bucket list of what you could do before the pain began.

Psalm 27:10 (NLT)

“Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.”

While living, it is important for people to be loved, feel love for others, have hope, and have a purpose. Sometimes those with chronic pain wonder how they can serve or have a purpose in God’s kingdom.

Esther Smith also wrote *But God Wouldn’t I be More Useful to You if I were Healthy?*

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Can you imagine yourself saying something similar?

Going back to the importance of being loved, to love others, to have hope, and to have a purpose, let's think of ways in which we can provide examples of each:

- Being loved
- To love others
- Have hope
- Have a purpose

Who do you know that suffers with chronic pain? How can you help? What will you commit to this week?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson. Our objectives were to:

1. See God's presence in the midst of illness.
2. Identify ways to serve God through chronic illness.
3. Find ways to help others who struggle with chronic illness.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what chronic illness is.
- Help children be aware of why there is sickness, disease, and death in the world.
- Help children be aware of how they can serve a person who is chronically ill.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about serving one another.
- Help children be aware that Jesus will one day end all sickness, disease, sorrow, and death.

Today we are going to discuss the topic of chronic illness. Chronic illness is a human health condition or disease that lasts for more than three months. Most of us know what it is like to experience being sick with a cold, the flu, or other minor afflictions that come and go. Even those minor ailments cause us great discomfort! It's no fun! But can you imagine how difficult it is to suffer with a sickness that doesn't go away? Chronic illness can happen to children as well as adults. No one expects that they would ever become sick with an illness that lasts for months and sometimes years.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where sickness is a part of life. In the beginning

of the world when God created man, Adam, and woman, Eve, they enjoyed perfect health. But when Adam and Eve committed the first sin by disobeying God, the consequence of their sin was passed on to all of us. When sin came into the world, it caused us to have to deal with sickness, disease, chronic illness, and even death. Romans 5:12 says, "...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin."

When people suffer with a long-term sickness, it not only affects them, but also everyone who loves and cares for them. At first, they may be overwhelmed with feelings of sadness and anger when they hear that they have an ailment that is going

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to require long-term medical treatment. Sometimes it takes them a while to believe what the doctor is telling them. Eventually, patients are forced to change their daily life activities, and their family and friends become their much depended upon support team.

This is where you can be a blessing as a child of God. You can become a valuable part of the ill person's support team. Those of us who have good health can show God our gratitude by doing what we can to ease the suffering of our sick friend or family member. Throughout the Bible, God makes it clear that we are to serve one another. Serving is a way of giving! One of the most important character traits of a Christian is a heart that loves to give to others in need. Galatians 6:2 says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." And Romans 15:1 says, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves." You may be young, but God loves to see His children of all ages serve and demonstrate His love for others. The younger you are when you learn to serve, the better. Then you will have many years of pleasing God!

Let us think of some things you can do as a young person to care for someone who needs your support. First, remember that the most powerful thing you can do for anyone dealing with chronic illness is to pray for them. When we pray, we are calling on God to come into the situation and work on the problem. Praying also gives us a chance to exercise and strengthen our faith and that is pleasing to God. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." So be sure to pray for them daily.

God has given children and young people a special ability to bring smiles and happiness to any situation. Another way you can show support to someone who is sick is through a visit and a hug! There is nothing like a hug from a child that can lift the spirit, cause laughter, and bring a smile to the face of a friend or family member who is not feeling well. The laughter

and smiles you bring are like medicine! Proverbs 17:22 says, “A cheerful heart is good medicine.” You can also take the time to make a card for your friend or loved one or write them a letter to express your love and support.

If they have a pet, perhaps you can make sure that the pet is fed on schedule and taken for a walk each day. The person may appreciate you tidying up their room or simply getting them a glass of water. Don’t hesitate to ask the person what you can do for them. Then do what you can.

Remember everything you do for the person who is enduring poor health is serving and serving is giving. Acts 20:35 says, “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” And in Matthew Chapter 25, Jesus tells us that when we care for the sick, we are really caring for Him in disguise. He says, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

The good news is that just as the first Adam by sinning brought sin, sickness, and death into the world, Christ Jesus, as the “last Adam” brings renewed life into the world. And He has promised that one day He will return and establish a new heaven and a new earth. Then there will be no more sickness, pain, sorrow, crying, or death. Rev 21:4 says, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Yes, that is very good news!

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Scripture SUPPORT

Romans 5:12

Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 15:1

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what chronic illness means.
- Lead children in a discussion about what it must feel like to have a chronic illness.
- Lead children in a discussion about how a loved one's chronic illness affects their family and friends.
- Lead children in discussion about what the Bible tells those of us who are strong to do.
- Lead children in a discussion about how they can serve and be supportive of their sick loved one.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

"A Love Letter for You" worksheet
White board and erasable markers
Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

"If we could see inside others hearts": Life in 4 min (must type in title). Discuss briefly.
(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- Tell children they are going to write letters of encouragement to people who are suffering from chronic illness. Let them know you will be sending their letters to a nursing home to encourage and be a blessing to people who are suffering from a long-term sickness. Begin by asking children what kind of things they could say to encourage the people who will receive their letters and make them feel better. Write their responses on the white board.

- Pass out “A Love Letter for You” worksheet. Have them start the letter with: “Dear Friend.” Have children write the sentences from the board that they have suggested on their blank Love Letter form. When they are finished, gather all their letters and place them in a big envelope and mail them to a nearby nursing home with instructions enclosed.

(See enclosed instructions to include.)

AGES 12-16

Materials

Poster board

Pencils, markers

Have children view YouTube:

“If we could see inside others hearts”: Life in 4 min (must type in title). Discuss briefly.

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- As a group, have children develop a list of things that people can do to support and encourage those who are chronically ill. Let them know they will use their suggestions to make a poster to hang in the church to remind people to bless “the least of these.” The heading on the poster is: “Serving Those Who Have a Chronic Illness.” Once children have generated a list, in the middle of their poster board have them write:

Matthew 25:40

Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

- Around the scripture have them write ways they can encourage and support those who suffer with a chronic illness.
- When their poster is finished, post it in the church so hearts will be convicted to minister to those who suffer with chronic illness.



Scripture SUPPORT

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the LORD Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Matthew 25:40

The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Revelations 21:4

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.




CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHAT AM I DOING FOR THE “LEAST OF THESE”?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I am a kind and caring person.</i>

Resources & Materials

- Rae, Kimberly. *Sick and Tired: Empathy, Encouragement, and Practical Help for Those Suffering from Chronic Health Problems*
- Smith, Esther. *When Chronic Pain & Illness Take Everything Away: How to Mourn Our Losses* (Chronic Pain and the Christian Life)
- Smith, Esther. *But God, Wouldn't I Be More Useful to You If I Were Healthy?* (Chronic Pain and the Christian Life)

Mate Selection

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

As you know, God created us to live in community with one another. One of the gifts He has given us is marriage. Since creation, selecting a marital partner has gone from arranged marriages, where the leaders in the home select an appropriate spouse, to individuals finding and determining who they should marry. With divorce rates going up, individuals need to be better prepared to find the right partner. Therefore, this week, we are going to focus on mate selection.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:


1. Determine when they should marry.
2. Understand how to select the right mate.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I will seek a mate who honors God.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome 5 minutes

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.


Last week we spent time talking about chronic illness and how to find God in the midst of suffering. We also identified ways to serve those who are chronically ill.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Ask:** How do you choose your friends? What helps you know if the person is a good friend or not-so-good friend?

We are going to play a game that will help us better understand what to look for in our friendships and future mates.

 **Do:** Game (http://www.character-education.info/members/dating_eight_mate_selection.htm): “The Mystery Bag.” Bring a person up to choose one of two bags, which look just alike. Now have someone else volunteer to take the other bag. Mention that both bags look equally as appealing on the outside. “The contents of both of these bags are edible and both are used in various recipes. Now, at the same time, I want each of you to put your hand in your bag, without peaking, and show us what was inside.” (In one of the bags, have a milk chocolate bar. In the other, have broken eggs or something else disgusting. Make sure the bags will not leak through. Bring a towel for hand washing!)

Debriefing: This game illustrates something very important about choosing a mate. Often what's outside doesn't tip us off to what's on the inside.

And some of us rely too much on the outward appearance, not caring about character and personality—what’s on the inside. How can we keep from getting a raw egg of a husband or wife? In this session, we’ll search for the answers.



Say: Sometimes friendship leads to marriage.

Let’s hear the story on how Isaac met his future wife.

Read: Genesis 24

Isaac and Rebekah

²⁴ *Abraham was now very old, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. ² He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh. ³ I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, ⁴ but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”*

⁵ *The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”*

⁶ *“Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said. ⁷ “The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring^[a] I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. ⁸ If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.” ⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.*

¹⁰ *Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master’s camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim^[b] and made his way to the town of Nahor. ¹¹ He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it*

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was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

¹² Then he prayed, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³ See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ May it be that when I say to a young woman, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

¹⁵ Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor. ¹⁶ The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

¹⁷ The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

¹⁸ “Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

¹⁹ After she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink.” ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. ²¹ Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka^[c] and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.^[d] ²³ Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

²⁴ She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor.” ²⁵ And she added,

"We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."

²⁶ Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD, ²⁷ saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."

²⁸ The young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. ²⁹ Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. ³⁰ As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. ³¹ "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD," he said. "Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

³² So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. ³³ Then food was set before him, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say."

"Then tell us," Laban said.

³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. ³⁷ And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, ³⁸ but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.'

³⁹ "Then I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not come back with me?'

⁴⁰ "He replied, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your

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journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family.

⁴¹ *You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.'*

⁴² *"When I came to the spring today, I said, 'LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. ⁴³ See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar," ⁴⁴ and if she says to me, "Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too," let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'*

⁴⁵ *"Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'*

⁴⁶ *"She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also.*

⁴⁷ *"I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?'*

"She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.'

"Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, ⁴⁸ and I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

⁵⁰ *Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah; take her and go and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."*

⁵² *When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD.*

⁵³ Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴ Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

⁵⁵ But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you^[e] may go."

⁵⁶ But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the LORD has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."

⁵⁷ Then they said, "Let's call the young woman and ask her about it." ⁵⁸ So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

"I will go," she said.

⁵⁹ So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men.

⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"Our sister, may you increase
to thousands upon thousands;
may your offspring possess
the cities of their enemies."

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. ⁶³ He went out to the field one evening to meditate,^[f] and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴ Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel ⁶⁵ and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"

"He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶ Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. ⁶⁷ Isaac



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Proverbs 12:4

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

Proverbs 18:22


He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.


Proverbs 31:10

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

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brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

 **Ask:** What can we learn from the story?

 **Say:** Today, we are going to talk about how to choose a mate to marry. For many of you, this is a long way off. Still, it is important to make plans for selecting the right mate.

As you know, God created us to live in community with one another. One of the gifts He has given us is marriage. Since creation, selecting a marital partner has gone from arranged marriages, where the leaders in the home select an appropriate spouse, to individuals finding and determining who they should marry. With divorce rates going up, individuals need to be better prepared to find the right partner. Therefore, this week we are going to focus on mate selection.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Determine when you should marry.
2. Understand how to select the right mate.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

As you enjoy your dinner, discuss with your children what they would look for in a future mate.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
Marriage	MATE SELECTION

What did you find out from your dinner time discussion?

Several factors predict feelings of initial attraction to another person, and several factors predict feelings of satisfaction in marriage. However, these two sets of factors are not the same, so it's important to focus on what is important in the long-term, even when you're at the beginning of a relationship.

What predicts initial attraction?

Here is what we know about attraction:

1. Physical attractiveness. It's not surprising that people tend to be attracted to good-looking people. Research shows that people around the world tend to agree on what make a person attractive, such as having a symmetrical face. People's physical attractiveness can change as they age, and attractiveness doesn't matter much when it comes to having a good, long-term relationship. Therefore, even though physical attractiveness will

play a role when most relationships are forming, it's important not to give physical attractiveness too much weight at the beginning of a relationship.

2. Similarity. People tend to be attracted to people who are like themselves. Similarity could be about similar tastes in music, food, and hobbies. Similarity could be about values, religion, and political views. Part of the reason why similarity predicts attraction is that people are most likely to meet others with similar preferences and values because they are drawn to the same places, organizations, and activities. People with similar values and beliefs tend to have fewer disagreements throughout the relationship, so it's a good idea to look for someone who shares those important views.

3. Reciprocity. Reciprocity means “what goes around comes around.” In this context, reciprocity means that people tend to like others who like them. If David likes Maria, Maria is more likely to like David; however, this is only true if David likes Maria in particular. If David likes all women, Maria will probably think that David is desperate. But if David likes Maria in particular, Maria would be more likely to like David, too. Showing that you like someone is important in long-term relationships, too. Married couples who have lots of positive interactions, say nice things to each other, and show each other physical affection are often happier and more likely to stay together than couples who don’t do these things.

What predicts long-term relationship satisfaction?

From history, what we know is that several factors predict satisfaction in marriages—some of these factors are under people’s control and others are not.

1. Enduring vulnerabilities. Enduring vulnerabilities are the past experiences that people bring into a relationship that could negatively affect the relationship. These vulnerabilities could include having grown up in a dysfunctional household, having a long-term mental illness, not having many financial resources, or any other experience or situation that has a long-term effect. People don’t have much control over these enduring vulnerabilities.

2. Stressful events. Stressful events are short-term events or situations that could negatively affect a person and the relationship. These events could be losing a job, a death in the family, or a short-term medical problem. People don’t have much control over these stressful events, either.

3. Adaptive processes. Although people can’t do much to control the enduring vulnerabilities and stressful events they experience, they can control how they respond to them. Positive

responses are called adaptive processes. Adaptive processes can be learned and practiced thus improving the relationship. Some adaptive processes include:

- *Appraisals*. We can think about an event of experience in more than one way. Some ways of thinking are more helpful than others. For example, if an employee learned that she was going to be let go from her job in a month, she could think that the job loss will ruin her life forever. Or, she could think that the job loss will give her an opportunity to find a better job. Seeing the opportunity in the situation would give her more motivation to look for and find another job. In a similar way, imagine that a couple got into a fight because the husband forgot the wife's birthday. The wife could think that her husband didn't love or care for her. Or, the wife could think that the very busy time that her husband has been having at work lately distracted him from remembering her birthday. Thinking about her husband's work-related stress would help keep the wife from making a conclusion that could make the fight get worse.

- *Conflict resolution*. Many couples experience conflict from time to time, and there are many ways to deal with conflicts when they happen. One of the worst things that a couple can do is get into a cycle of negativity in which each person responds to the other person by adding more complaints and accusations rather than addressing the issue that started the conflict.

- *Coping strategies*. People can use coping strategies to help deal with stressful situations and relationship conflicts. The most helpful coping strategies include:

- Appraisal-focused coping strategies: Thinking about a situation in ways that are helpful.

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- Problem-focused coping strategies:
Dealing with the cause of the problem.

- *Social support.* Social support refers to being cared for and supported by other people, such as one's spouse, family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Social support is often in the form of emotional support, such as having someone who will listen to you. Social support can also come in the form of help with a task or need, such as someone babysitting or helping fix a leaky faucet. People with more social support can deal with the long-term and short-term problems that they deal with in their personal life and relationship.

ACTIVITY

Activity with handout.

Spend a few minutes reflecting. If single, think about someone you might want to marry. If married, think about you and your mate.

DISCUSS

- What predictor(s) that were just mentioned need to be addressed in you and your relationships.
- How can you improve your long-term relationship satisfaction?

DISCUSS (from Thomas, 2013, p.82)

- Have you ever (or do you now) [believe] the opening statement: When it comes to choosing a mate, God will bring the right person to me at the right time. I'll just sit back and wait.
- If you are single and desire to find a mate: Since studies show most people eventually find their mate at church or work or are introduced through family and friends, what can you do in the coming months to more earnestly pursue a marriage partner through these avenues?

- If you are married, as a family member or friend, who should you be introducing to one another?
- If single, what things might you need to address or improve in your own life in order to be someone that a person would truly want to marry?

We've covered a lot of material in this lesson.

Our teaching objectives were to:

1. Determine when you should marry.
2. Understand how to select the right mate.

This week's commitment statement is: I will seek a mate who honors God.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

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50 Item List of Helpful Marriage Similarities

(From *Finding the Love of Your Life*, by Dr. Neil Clark Warren)

Found at <http://www.familylifeeducation.org/gilliland/procgroup/50Similarities.htm>

Discuss the each of the following openly with your partner or think about your future mate. Ask yourselves, “Are we similar in” or “Do we have similar views on....”

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Socio-economic background of family | 22. Life goals | 40. Geographical area in which to live |
| 2. Intelligence | 23. Attitudes about weight | 41. Size and style of house |
| 3. Formal education | 24. Religious and spiritual beliefs and preferences | 42. Type of furniture and decoration |
| 4. Verbal skills | 25. Amount of church involvement | 43. Amount and type of travel preferred |
| 5. Expected roles for both persons within marriage | 26. Family spiritual involvement | 44. How to spend vacations |
| 6. Views about power distribution within the family | 27. Hobbies and interests | 45. How to celebrate major holidays |
| 7. Desired number of children | 28. Type of music enjoyed | 46. How much time to spend together |
| 8. When a family should be started | 29. Energy level for physical activities | 47. When to go to sleep and get up |
| 9. Child rearing views | 30. Sexual drive and sexual interests | 48. Temperature of home during the day and night |
| 10. Political philosophy | 31. Amount of income to be spent and saved | 49. Activity during meals |
| 11. Views about smoking, alcohol and drugs | 32. How money should be allocated (clothes, vacation, etc.) | 50. Television programs preferred |
| 12. Amount of involvement with in-laws | 33. Amount of money to be given away and to whom | |
| 13. Sense of humor | 34. Degree of risks to be taken with investments | |
| 14. Punctuality | 35. Attitudes about cleanliness—house, clothes, body, etc. | |
| 15. Dependability | 36. Ways of handling sickness | |
| 16. Desire for verbal intimacy and ability to be intimate | 37. Health standards—when to see a doctor | |
| 17. The role of conflict and how to resolve it | 38. Interpersonal and social skills | |
| 18. The way to handle anger | 39. Amount and type of social involvement preferred | |
| 19. How friendships with the opposite sex should be handled | | |
| 20. Expected amount of privacy and rules for its use | | |
| 21. Level of ambition | | |

Note: “If you are extremely different from your partner in your attitudes and desires, you would be unwise to allow your relationship to proceed beyond a friendship” (Warren, 2005, p. 233)

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Marriage

MATE SELECTION

Objectives

- Help children be aware of how marriage began.
- Help children be aware of why God created marriage.
- Help children be aware of when or if they should marry.
- Help children be aware of importance of selecting the right mate.
- Help children be aware of characteristic of a godly mate.

In the beginning God created the earth and everything in the earth. God was pleased with all that He had created. Soon afterward, He created man and put him in charge of His awesome creation, but something was missing. In Genesis 2:18, the LORD said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." So, in Genesis 2:21-24, the Bible tells us:

²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs^[a] and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^[b] he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."*

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

What a beautiful story! Here, it tells us that God created marriage because He doesn't think that man should be alone. And God then created the woman because He said she is the helper and mate that is just right for man. God told man and woman they

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were created and joined together in marriage to be a family. He told them to have many children and raise them to love and honor Him. That was God's plan for marriage. God has a perfect plan for everything!

In this story, we see that God created Eve who was just the right mate for Adam. So, for a Christian man who is trusting God and desires to have a wife, God will do the same thing for him when the time comes. And if a Christian woman desires to be married, she should ask God to fashion and ready her for the husband God will bring into her life someday.

The Bible tells us that some people may not have a desire to marry. However, when a Christian single person decides they want to be married, it is extremely important for them to pray and ask for God's help in bringing just the right man or woman into their life. Then they need to follow God's guidance because next to accepting Christ as your Savior, choosing a marriage partner is the most important decision you will make in your lifetime.

Marriage is a covenant that a man and woman make in the sight of God to love, cherish, sacrifice, and care for each other for the rest of their lives. When you marry, you become one flesh with your spouse, and everything that affects them will affect you and any children you may have. Now here is a very important word of wisdom: Since God is the one who created marriage, if you pray and turn the search over to Him, He will help you find just the right mate for you. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." God wants you to know that the mate that He selects for you will love you just as you are.

In the meantime, God wants you to be still and wait on Him to fulfill your request. During your unmarried time, He wants you to spend it bettering yourself and strengthening your relationship with

Him. Second Peter 3:18 says, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” So, spend time talking to God, learning the promises in the Bible, and meditating on them.

Use this time to establish and cultivate good friendships. God brings friends into our lives to keep us involved with fun and entertaining activities. Friends encourage us and help support us in times of difficulty. Platonic friendships help us simply enjoy each other’s company and get our focus off seeking a romantic relationship. During this season of waiting, get involved in things you enjoy. Remember, when God created you, He gave you talents and abilities He wants you to use for Him. Take this time to develop those talents. It generates passion and enthusiasm for the life God has planned for you and makes Him smile.

You could also try something new! Perhaps you have always wanted to play the piano or maybe you have thought about taking up tennis. What about that trip you have always wanted to take? This time before marriage is a perfect time to follow a dream or accomplish something you’ve always wanted to do. Proverbs 16:3 tells us, “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” Get involved in volunteering. Spending time helping others always enriches our lives and makes a difference in the lives of others. It takes our attention off ourselves, brings a feeling of satisfaction, and honors God. First Peter 4:10 says, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

When you reach the right age and the time comes to think about finding the person who is just right for you, it might be helpful to make a list of character traits you desire in a mate. Your list should include your personality traits and the personality traits you are looking for in a mate and your physical traits and the physical traits you hope to find in a mate.

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Here are some desirable characteristic areas that most men and women pay attention to when looking for a mate: Personality, religion, spirituality, sense of humor, intelligence, common interests, good looks, cleanliness, voice, talent, money, and profession. However, for the Christian man or woman, mate selection qualifications go a bit deeper. Here are some things to consider in the character of a godly mate:

- Has the person accepted Jesus as his or her personal Savior?
- Does the person have a church home and attend church regularly?
- Does the person keep his or her promises?
- Is the person dependable?
- Is the person honest and trustworthy?
- Is the person wise and intelligent?
- Does the person make good choices?
- Does the person surround themselves with godly, Christian friends?
- Is the person kind, compassionate, and hospitable?
- Is the person a generous giver?

Now a word of caution: Be careful not to pay too much attention to the outside of the person.

Though physical attraction may be important, that is only one thing to consider. There are other elements that make a person attractive. Some of those characteristics are a strong faith in God, a positive attitude, a great sense of humor, staying true to self, and having a heart of unconditional love and forgiveness.

When it comes to seeking a mate, turn the search over to God, and remember in Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Psalm 37:4 says, "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

God has just the right mate for you, and someday, when the time is right, your paths will lead you to each other.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how marriage began.
- Lead children in a discussion about why God created marriage.
- Lead children in a discussion about when or if they should marry.
- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of selecting the right mate.
- Lead children in a discussion about characteristics of a godly mate.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

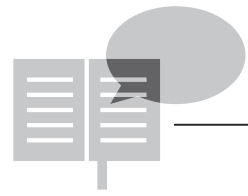
“Words to Describe My Character Traits” worksheet
Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/YMg2HNaEtVI> (If possible)
(If not possible, do exercise without video.)

- Discuss the topic of importance of character traits from the lesson.
- On the “Words That Describe My Character Traits” worksheet, have children circle the words that they feel describe them.
- Let them write any other words on the sheet that are character traits that describe them (good or bad).
- Have the children choose one or two words they circled and share why.

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Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 2:18

*It is not good for the man to be alone.
I will make a helper suitable for him.*

Genesis 2:21-24

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;*

*she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."*

*That is why a man leaves his father
and mother and is united to his wife,
and they become one flesh.*

1 Corinthians 7:8

*To the unmarried and widows I say
that it is good for them to remain
single, as I am.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your
heart and lean not on your own
understanding; in all your ways submit
to him, and he will make your paths
straight.*

2 Peter 3:18

*But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be glory both now and forever!
Amen.*

Proverbs 16:3

*Commit to the LORD whatever you do,
and he will establish your plans.*

1 Peter 4:10

*Each of you should use whatever gift
you have received to serve others, as
faithful stewards of God's grace in its
various forms.*

Matthew 6:33

*But seek first his kingdom and his
righteousness, and all these things
will be given to you as well.*

Psalms 37:4

*Take delight in the LORD, and he will
give you the desires of your heart.*

AGES 12-16

Materials

“Choosing Important Character Traits” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/knP6cVQJ4MM> (If possible)

(If not possible, do exercise without video.)

- Discuss briefly, the importance of a person’s character traits. (Use information from the video and the lesson.)
- Have children complete the “Choosing Important Character Traits” worksheet.
- After they have completed the worksheet, if time permits, have each child pick one or two character traits they selected and explain why those are important to them.

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CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I TAKING TIME TO WORK ON IMPROVING
MY CHARACTER TRAITS?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God is helping me grow into
just the person He created
me to be.*

WORDS TO DESCRIBE
MY CHARACTER TRAITS

Wish Positive Confident
Believe **Belief** **Honor**
Strong *Pure* Fun-Loving Humorous
Legacy *Dream* *Cool* Talented Athletic
Playful Faith Dedicated **Serious**
Musical *Focused* *Values* *Crazy* *Happy*
Spiritual **Life** *Caring* **Musical**
Thoughtful Inspiring Intelligent
Soulful Funny **Leader** **Gentle**
Bold *Dance* Breath Always
Love Sharing **Bold** Affectionate
Remember Brave Clever Curious

CHOOSING IMPORTANT CHARACTER TRAITS

Choose the 10 Character Traits in the list below that are the most important to you. Number them in order of importance. Be ready to explain why.

- _____ 1. Shows concern and compassion for others
- _____ 2. Uses clean language
- _____ 3. Believes in God and His Son Jesus
- _____ 4. Is thoughtful
- _____ 5. Does not use drugs or other addictive substances
such as alcohol or tobacco
- _____ 6. Has interests similar to mine
- _____ 7. Respects authority
- _____ 8. Has a good relationship with his/her parents
- _____ 9. Has a sense of humor
- _____ 10. Deals well with conflict and/or disappointment
- _____ 11. Is forgiving
- _____ 12. Is wise and intelligent
- _____ 13. Intends to graduate from high school/college
- _____ 14. Is clean and has good hygiene
- _____ 15. My parents approve of him/her
- _____ 16. Is kind and generous
- _____ 17. Is honest and trustworthy
- _____ 18. Is dependable and keeps promises
- _____ 19. Has godly friends
- _____ 20. Makes good choices

Resources & Materials

- A special thank you to Dr. Laura Luchies for her contributions to this lesson.
- Cloud, Henry. (2017) *Boundaries in Dating: How Healthy Choices Grow Healthy Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Chandler, Matt. (2015). *The Mingling of Souls: God's Design for Love, Marriage, Sex, and Redemption*. Colorado Springs: David C Cook.
- Finkel, E. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2010). *Attraction and rejection*. In R. F. Baumeister, & E. J. Finkel (Eds.), *Advanced social psychology: The state of the science* (pp. 419-459). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Karney, B. R. & Bradbury, T. N. (1995). *The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, method, and research*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 3-34.
- Thomas, Gary (2013). *The Sacred Search: What If It's Not about Who You Marry, But Why?* Colorado Springs: David C Cook
- Warren, Neil Clark. (2005). *Falling in Love for All the Right Reasons: How to Find Your Soul Mate*. New York: CenterStreet.

Sexuality

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on sexuality. While you might think that you and you alone are responsible for your body, did you know that your body really does not belong to you?

First Corinthians 6:19 says, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”

God created each of us in unique ways. We feel, we think, we learn, we love. Sex is one of the ways in which God gave us to express love to another.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:


1. Explain why God created sex.
2. Explain God's design for sex.
3. Create a healthy sexual lifestyle.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: I will honor God with my sexuality.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome 5 minutes


 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.


Last week we spent time learning about what characteristics to look for in a godly mate how to select the right mate.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?


Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** God desires that we take care of our bodies. The Bible says that our bodies are a temple. First Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." **Ask:** How do you take care of your body? What do you not do?

 **Say:** God created sex for a male and female in a marital relationship. Sex outside of this context is wrong.

 **Say:** There are many ways we can demonstrate what happens when we sin and do not take care of our bodies.

Object Lesson: (<http://www.youthgroupcollective.com/ygc/how-to-create-a-youth-sex-relationship-talk-free-lesson>)

 **Do:** Choose from one of the following object lessons:

1. Take water and spit phlegm in it and say, "No one would ever want to drink this."
2. Hold up a beautiful rose and encourage others to pass it around during the talk.

At the end, say “Where’s that rose?” At this point, it’s been damaged and lost its beauty and shine, and some petals have fallen off because of everyone touching it. Say, “Who would ever want this rose now?”

3. Hold up a really sticky piece of tape and press it against someone’s shoulder. Then, take it off and go to someone else and press it against their shoulder and take it off. Say, “Every time, we lose our stickiness, we lose our ability to bond.”

Try this instead: Hold up a 100-dollar bill. Ask people if they want it. Then crumple it up and ask people if they still want it. Now stomp on it. Now spit on it. Now tear it in half. Guess what? It’s still worth \$100. We’re going to sin. We’re going to make mistakes. We’re going to make a mess of things. God will still think we’re valuable. God won’t think less of us. Our value isn’t based on who we are or what we do, but it’s based on who God is—God is love and God is unchanging, and God will always love us and that will never change!

Today’s teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain why God created sex.
2. Explain God’s design for sex.
3. Create a healthy sexual lifestyle.

This week’s commitment statement is: I will honor God with my sexuality.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

As you enjoy your dinner, answer the following question: How do we show that we love others?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Mark 10:6-9

“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Song of Solomon

40 minutes

Parent Training

Marriage

SEXUALITY

Why did God create sex?

(Taken from *The Mingling of Souls* by Chandler.) Before sin entered the world, God created man and woman. No part of either's physic was sinful. God purposefully and carefully shaped each body part. After Adam woke from his sleep and saw Eve for the first time, "He began to sing" (p.13). At that time, Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed (Genesis 2).

God then gave man and woman the gift to be fruitful and multiply. When we reproduce, we bring glory to God.

What happened next in Genesis 3?

"We discover there that sin entered the world through Adam's and Eve's disobedience, fracturing the harmony and disrupting and disgracing the rhythm. Think of a loud electric guitar that's not playing correctly in a band. It's discordant and distracting. You can sort of sense how the song was meant to be played, but the dissonance is obscuring the beauty, the harmony. The guitarist might not even know he's off" (Chandler, 2015, p. 15).

"God's plan is for a man and a woman in the bond of the marriage covenant to have their souls—not just their bodies—become one" (Chandler, 2015, p. 17).

What does that statement mean?

"If you have physical attraction and no companionship in your relationship, you'll eventually be miserable; but if you have deep companionship with each other, physical attraction isn't as important and becomes less and less so as time passes" (Chandler, 2015, p.41).

Discuss author's statement.

According to Chandler (2015), sex is...
(discuss each statement)

- romantic
- tender
- passionate
- holy
- reciprocal
- fulfilling

Here are some thoughts about the role of sex in adult relationships:

Engaging in sex can be part of a positive cycle in relationships:

1. When people feel more closely connected to their partner on an emotional level, they also tend to feel more sexual desire for their partner. This is especially true for women.
2. When a couple has sex, they tend to show more affection toward one another the following day than they usually do. This affection could be shown through kind words to one another or through physical touch. What's even more interesting is that expressing and receiving affection makes people happier about life in general.

The reasons why people have sex are also important. Sometimes people have sex because they want to promote positive outcomes for themselves, their partner, and their relationship. For example, they might have sex to feel good, to express love for their partner, and to promote intimacy in their relationship. These are called approach motivations because people want to approach or get good things. Sometimes people have sex because they want to avoid negative outcomes. For example, they might want to keep their partner from getting upset or avoid conflict in their relationship. These are called avoidance motivations because people want to avoid bad things.

When people have sex for approach reasons, they tend to have a more positive mood and feel better about their relationship. However, when people have sex for avoidance reasons, they tend to have a more negative mood and feel worse about their relationship.

One needs to keep boundaries regarding sex before marriage. Here are some tips (Warren, 2005):

Notes

Notes

1. Write out how you will control your sexual passion before marriage and review that card daily. Memorize it.
2. Make sure you plan your activities and involvements with people of the opposite sex, so you don't lose control of the situation.
3. Find somebody you can talk about sexual matters who is unconditional in their regard for you. In other words, you do not have to worry about offending them.

Many have children and wonder how to talk about sex. Here are some resources:

- <http://www.annemariamiller.com/authors/stan-brenna-jones/>
- *How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex* by Stan and Brenna Jones
- *The Story of Me* by Stan and Brenna Jones (intended for children ages 3-5)
- *Before I Was Born* by Carolyn Nystrom (intended for children ages 5-8)
- *What's the Big Deal? Why God Cares About Sex* by Stan and Brenna Jones (intended for children ages 8-11)
- *Facing the Facts: The Truth About Sex and You* by Stan and Brenna Jones (intended for children ages 11-14)

Today's session was not easy for some. Hopefully you found it enlightening.

Our teaching objectives were to:

1. Explain why God created sex.
2. Explain God's design for sex.
3. Create a healthy sexual lifestyle.

This week's commitment statement is: I will honor God with my sexuality.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Marriage		SEXUALITY	

Objectives

- Help children be aware of the meaning of sexual integrity.
- Help children be aware of healthy sexual behaviors.
- Help children be aware of the importance of respecting and taking care their body.
- Help children be aware of the sexualization of our society.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about sex.

Today we are going to talk about sexuality. The definition of the word sexuality is: The capacity for sexual feelings; a person's sexual orientation; or sexual activity. Sexuality is something that is very important to God. In Psalm 139:14, God tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." These verses tell us how precious we are to God. Out of all the things He created, human beings are His favorite part of creation. God calls us His masterpiece!

After God created man (Adam), God said it was not good for man to be alone, so

God put Adam in a deep sleep, and while he slept, God took one of Adam's ribs. In Genesis 2:22, it tells us, "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man."

That is when God created marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." Yes, God created both sexes, male and female, and He said it was very good! Genesis 1:28 says that God gave his blessing and told them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

It is God's will for His children to have a healthy God-given viewpoint on sexuality. It

is a natural part of life. God made us sexual beings. Sexuality is more than body parts and sex. God wants His children to reserve sex for marriage not because it is bad or dirty, but because it is a precious and wonderful gift. Because it is a gift, God expects us to treat it special. It is to be set apart, sanctified, and engaged in only in the right context. The Bible tells us that the right context for sex is marriage. Sex outside of marriage is called fornication or adultery. Fornication is when a single person has sex and is not married. The Bible teaches us that sex outside of marriage is sin and a serious offense to God (Hebrews 13:4). Sex is not for casual recreation, and it is not just a way to express love—it is intended for a husband and wife to become one flesh and have children.

Until you are grown up and become married, sexuality for you mainly involves an overall program of health and wellness. We honor God by doing all that we can to keep our bodies healthy, clean, and pure to be used by Him for His glory. You do that by practicing sexual integrity. How we feel about our bodies and care for them and respect them is called sexual integrity. The word integrity means having strong moral principles in every area of our lives including our sexuality. Sexual integrity is something that you should start practicing when you are young and continue throughout your entire life. It involves appreciating your body, taking responsibility for your own behavior, communicating effectively with both genders in appropriate and respectful ways, and learning to act in a proper and responsible way with the opposite sex.

When we become saved, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us. At this point, we become sanctified and set apart from the world for God's purpose for our life. First Corinthians 6:18-20 says, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor

Notes

God with your bodies.” Understand that though the word body refers to our sexuality, it includes every area of our lives.

The Bible lets us know that God’s plan is for His children is for them to stay sexually pure until marriage, and that is also the heart’s desire of every Christian parent. This is a critical decision for you to make, and the path you choose will affect your self-image, your health, your reputation, who you marry, any children you may have in the future, and your entire life. So, in order to help young people honor God with their bodies and remain sexually pure, they are encouraged to make a commitment to self-discipline and living by the Purity Code. When you choose to live by the Purity Code, you are promising to:

1. Honor God with your body: (1 Corinthians 6:20)

It means not participating in sexual sin, but it also includes practicing good hygiene, eating healthy, exercising, and going to bed on time.

2. Renewing your mind for good: (Romans 12:2)

This includes taking time to read the Bible and pray, listening to wholesome, inspirational music that reflects on positive messages, and finding and spending time with Christian friends where you lift each other up and engage in encouraging, favorable conversations. Philippians 4:8-9 says, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

3. Turn your eyes from worthless things: Matthew

6:22 says, “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” And an area that is closely related is guarding your heart.

4. Guard your heart: This is the final part of the Purity Code commitment. Proverbs 4:23 tells us, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” God is telling us to be careful what we allow to go into our hearts because it will come out in our words and actions, and any corruption we allow in our hearts can cause us much regret and grief. This verse is talking about the inner person—your thoughts, feelings, desires, and choices that make you who you are. So, what are some ways to guard your heart? You guard your heart by selecting carefully what television shows you watch, what sites you visit on the internet, and what books you read. You also guard your heart by refusing to listen to music with harsh, violent, disrespectful lyrics and by staying away from R rated movies and mature rated video games.

God has given your parents the responsibility to teach you what the Bible says about sexuality and living a pure and wholesome lifestyle. In Proverbs 22:6 God tells parents, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.” Your parents know what’s best for you, and God is holding them accountable for keeping you safe. That’s why you want to be obedient and listen to them. Also, be sure to keep an open line of communication with them about healthy boundaries and sexuality. Allow your parents to guide you along this critical path.

First Thessalonians 4:3 says, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.” By choosing to live by the Purity Code, you will be showing godly wisdom as you honor God, the creator of your body, and fulfill His desire for you to live a prosperous, healthy, and holy life.

Notes

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about the meaning of sexuality.
- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of healthy sexual behaviors.
- Lead children in a discussion about respecting and taking care of their bodies.
- Lead children in a discussion about the sexualization of our society.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible says about sex.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

“I Promise” worksheet

Pencils or Ink Pens

You may want easel or whiteboard for discussion (optional).

Have children view YouTube:

https://youtu.be/jYGzLr3W_zs “6 Steps on How to Take Care of Your Body.” (If not possible, do exercise without video.)

- Briefly discuss with the children the Purity Code promise list from the lesson. Discuss ways they can:
 - 1) Honor God with their bodies.
 - 2) Renew their minds.
 - 3) Turn their eyes from worthless things.
 - 4) Guard their hearts.
- Then have children complete the “I Promise” worksheet.
- Have children share some of the things they wrote.

AGES 12-16

Materials

"I Promise" worksheet

Vow of Purity Certificate (Pink for Girls—Blue for Boys)

You may want easel or whiteboard for discussion (optional).

Pencils or Ink Pens

Have children view YouTube:

Choose to Be Pure. <https://youtu.be/2xE-iK1pdp0>

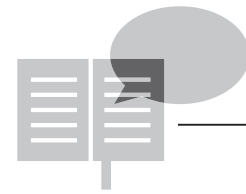
(If possible) (If not possible, do exercise without video.)

- Briefly discuss with the children the Purity Code promise list from the lesson. Discuss ways they can:
 - 1) Honor God with their bodies.
 - 2) Renew their minds.
 - 3) Turn their eyes from worthless things.
 - 4) Guard their hearts.
- Then have children complete the "I Promise" Worksheet.

When completed...

- Have older children sign the "Vow of Purity" Certificate. (Teacher/Teachers sign on Witness line.)
- Hand certificates out to the children.
- If you would like, the teacher can have them recite the oath out loud as a group (optional).

Notes



Scripture SUPPORT

Psalms 139:14

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

Ephesians 2:10

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

Genesis 2:22

Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Genesis 1:28

God gave his blessing and told them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Philippians 4:8-9

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Matthew 6:22

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

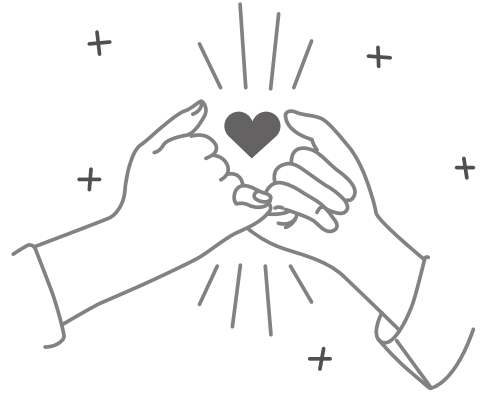
Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.

I Promise



Here's how I will:

1. Honor God with my body.
2. Renew my mind.
3. Turn my eyes from worthless things.
4. Guard my heart.

Signed _____

Date Presented _____




CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I TREAT MY BODY LIKE IT IS THE TEMPLE
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO THIS WEEK TO WORK
ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>I honor God by respecting my body and taking good care of it.</i>

Resources & Materials

A special thank you to Dr. Laura Luchies for her contributions to this lesson.

Birnbaum, G. E., Reis, H. T., Mizrahi, M., Kanat-Maymon, Y., Sass, O., & Granovski-Milner, C. (2016). *Intimately Connected: The Importance of Partner Responsiveness for Experiencing Sexual Desire*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111, 530-546.

Cloud, Henry. (2017). *Boundaries in Dating: How Healthy Choices Grow Healthy Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Chandler, Matt. (2015). *The Mingling of Souls: God's Design for Love, Marriage, Sex, and Redemption*. Colorado Springs: David C Cook.

Thomas, Gary. (2013). *The Sacred Search: What If It's Not about Who You Marry, But Why?* Colorado Springs: David C Cook.

Warren, Neil Clark. (2005). *Falling in Love for All the Right Reasons: How to Find Your Soul Mate*. New York: CenterStreet.

Widows and Widowers

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

Time. What do we do with every minute of every day? How many minutes does one have in a lifetime? How long is a lifetime?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3

A Time for Everything

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

² *a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build.*

The season of death is a hard season, especially for those who are left to live as a widow or widower. This week we are going to focus on widows and widowers.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Find comfort after losing a mate.
2. Choose to be strong and positively influence the world after losing a mate.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Whether single, married, divorced, or widowed, God has a plan for me in this world.


continued

Notes


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome 5 minutes


 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning how to honor God with our sexuality.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction 5 minutes

 **Say:** Let's take a few minutes together to read out loud our Family Commitment Statements (read together out loud the previous statements).

 **Ask:** What do we do with every minute of every day? How many minutes does one have in a lifetime? How long is a lifetime?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3

A Time for Everything

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build.*

The season of death is a hard season, especially for those who are left to live as a widow or widower.

This week we are going to focus on widows and widowers.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Find comfort after losing a mate.
2. Choose to be strong and positively influence the world after losing a mate.

This week's commitment statement is: Whether single, married, divorced, or widowed, God has a plan for me in this world.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

As you enjoy your meal, discuss the following question: How can you show love to the widows and widowers in your life?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

40 minutes	
Parent Training	
<i>Marriage</i>	WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS

Losing one's spouse is incredibly painful. If you have lost a spouse or know someone who has lost a spouse, today's sessions will provide some questions to ask and answers to move forward. Questions and many answers come from Rabey's work (2000). Rabey was a young woman who lost her husband in a hot air balloon accident.

Share an experience from a death that impacted you.

Some wonder how long the pain will last.

Will you always hurt this deeply?

DISCUSS

"You will feel out-of-joint for a long time. That's okay. In time you will adjust. You will feel normal again, but normal won't look the same as before. It will be a new kind of normal" (p.10).

When going through grief, sometimes you feel as you are walking aimlessly with no clear direction.

Are there things you should be doing?

- Pray when facing difficulties—pray that God will give you a clear mind to resolve the situation.
- Create a memorial—include items that remind you of your spouse.
- Write down meaningful Scripture passages.
- Journal your feelings.
- Carry a legal pad or something to track what needs to be done.
- Check references on those who help you with business decisions.
- If you do not know much about budgeting or finances, attend a workshop.
- Eat well and get physically fit.

People experience a wide variety of emotions.

Should you be feeling this way?

- Ask for God's grace to handle unanswered questions like "why did this happen?"
- Be honest with your feelings and place your trust in God.
- It is okay to feel good.
- Pain will come back time after time; the pain will not always be as deep.
- Just because you cannot see God, does not mean that He is not near.
- Matthew 28:28; Ephesians 3:17-19

Finding a place or person to receive comfort from can be more difficult than you think.

Where can you find comfort?

- Allow yourself to cry.
- Remind yourself that "feelings are not an indication of the actual condition of my life" (p. 62).

For many, when one loses a spouse, the result is being a single parent.

What do I do when I am a single parent again?

- Kindness and firmness go hand in hand.
- We cannot guarantee that our children will never suffer again.
- Try not to live as your spouse would have done it.
- Be as "normal" as possible.
- Allow others to be the father or mother that is no longer alive.
- Update your will, preparing for your own death.
- Invest in the lives of your children.

How do I deal with other people?

- Soak in their love.
- Realize that others have opinions and pray for discernment.
- Understand that others might not even mention the lost spouse's name.
- Grief is expressed differently.

Notes

Notes

- Find a few close relationships.
- Realize that others feel pain for your loss as well.

Time has passed, and some begin to feel the desire to move on with life.

How do you move on with your life?

- Sometimes it is good to put away photos and focus on the present and future.
- Clean out closets.

Sometimes those who have gone through a loss eventually begin to think about dating again.

What advice can you give someone about dating?

- Sexual desires are normal.
- Realize that you are lonely and vulnerable.
- Some members of the same gender feel threatened around the grieving widow or widower.
- Let go of comparisons.
- Meet a date in a neutral, public location in the daytime.
- Drive your own car.
- Meet for a short amount of time.
- Graciously decline if not interested in another meeting.
- If you have children at home, meet a date away from home.
- Move slowly.
- It takes time to get to know someone (p. 130).

What can you advise someone experiencing grief regarding the future?

- Hebrews 11:1
- Jeremiah 29:11
- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- “God is patient, and he will stay beside you as you walk from grief to joy” (p. 143).
- Romans 8:28

Today's topic is not easy. Our teaching objectives were to:

- 1 Find comfort after losing a mate.
2. Choose to be strong and positively influence the world after losing a mate.

This week's commitment statement is: Whether single, married, divorced, or widowed, God has a plan for me in this world.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

Notes

Ages 4-16		40 minutes	
Student Training			
Marriage		WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS	

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what widow and widower means.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says about widows.
- Help children be aware of the challenges of widows and widowers.
- Help children be aware of ways they can help and encourage widows and widowers.

In earlier lessons, we learned that in Genesis 1:1-25, God created the heavens and the earth and everything in the earth, but after that, in Genesis 1:26, God's favorite part of creation happened—God created man. God loved the man He created, and God could tell it was not good for man to be alone, so God created a helper for the man—a mate who was just right for him. In Genesis 2:23, when God brought her to the man, the man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." In Genesis 2:24, the Bible goes on to say, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." That was the beginning of marriage, and God is the one who created it. Marriage is like no other relationship. It is a man and

a woman entering a covenant with God to love, honor, cherish, and care for each other in sickness and in health all their life, until death parts them.

A young couple feels that they love each other and are ready to make a lifetime commitment to each other. They decide they want to get married. They are exhilarated to begin their new life together. They are inseparable! In time, husbands and wives become best friends. They learn to trust and depend on each other. They start a new family, become parents, and raise their children together. They exhort one another and cheer each other on. They extend to each other their never-ending support. As God has planned, the husband and wife have become one. Mark 10:9 says, "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

As years go by, they share so many wonderful experiences and memories. Their children are now grown and have started families of their own. The couple has been through the good times as well as the bad times, but they agree that the good times far outweigh the bad. The couple is celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary! It's hard for them to believe that they have been married 40 years. The years have brought them closer together than ever. Neither of them can imagine their life without the other, but they realize they are getting older and cannot live forever. Unfortunately, the husband or the wife will die, and the remaining spouse will end up living their elder years as a widow or a widower. When a woman's husband dies, she is then called a widow, and when a man's wife dies, he is called a widower.

Research states that each year more than a million people will join the 13.8 million widows and widowers in the United States. It is important to mention that the death of a spouse can happen to young married couples as well as older ones. And because marriage is such a unique and powerful relationship, the grief that follows the loss of a husband or wife can be extremely painful. However, it is important to mention that no two widows or widowers are the same when it comes to handling this very difficult and distressing time. Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." So, we know that when people experience widowhood, the LORD is right there by their side to console them and support them.

When a couple has been married and one flesh, the death of a spouse is like losing a part of themselves. The person left behind will begin a very different lifestyle than they were used to. The person is forced to learn how to get by without a spouse. In many cases, widows end up with less money in their budget for the things that they need. Widows are also more apt to stay at home and avoid socializing with others. This can bring on a spirit of lingering sadness and depression. Widows report



Scripture SUPPORT

Genesis 1:1-25

This is the story of creation.

Genesis 2:23

The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Mark 10:9

Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.

Psalms 34:18

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

experiencing a higher level of fear, loneliness, and anxiety. It can be of comfort to the widow to read Isaiah 54:5 where it says, “For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.”

God is the great Comforter, and He knows that widowhood is a deep grief to bear. That’s why, in the Bible, God lets us know that the welfare and care of widows is important to Him. In James 1:27 it says, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” And even though God doesn’t specifically mention widowers, as Christians, He tells us to love one another, so we know that He wants us to show love for them too. John 13:34 says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

So, let us look at some ways to demonstrate God’s love and concern to any widow or widower God has placed in your life. You can draw them a beautiful picture or make them an encouraging card. You could call them on the phone to chat or sit with them as they watch a favorite television program. You could play a fun board game with them. You could help them tidy up their living space or run an errand for them. And remember, the things that brighten up their day the most are your hugs, kisses, and your beautiful smile. These are just a few of the ways you can be a blessing to a widow or widower family member or friend and help them feel loved. Romans 12:13 says, “Share with the LORD’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” When you take the time to comfort and care for widows and widowers, you are practicing that verse, and that makes God smile!

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about what widow and widower means.
- Lead children in a discussion about the challenges of widows and widowers.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible says about widows.
- Lead children in a discussion about the ways they can demonstrate God's love to widows and widowers.



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

"Ideas for Helping Widows and Widowers" worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

Easel or whiteboard for discussion (Optional)

Have children view YouTube:

videos: https://youtu.be/wooN9_417os and/or <https://youtu.be/dtNZyFV9n40> (If not possible, do exercise without video.)

- After viewing video/videos, as a group, discuss briefly ways children could help widows and widowers.
- To get them started, write suggestions on the easel or whiteboard.
- Then have the children write more suggestions on their "Ideas for Helping Widows and Widowers" worksheet.



Scripture SUPPORT

Isaiah 54:5

For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

John 13:34

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Romans 12:13

Share with the LORD's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Notes

AGES 12-16

Materials

“Ideas for Helping Widows and Widowers” worksheet
Pencils, crayons, or markers

Have children view YouTube:

videos: https://youtu.be/woon9_417os and/or
<https://youtu.be/dtNZyFV9n40> (If not possible, do
exercise without video.)

- After viewing video/videos, discuss briefly ways children could help widows and widowers.
- Then have children fill out “Ideas for Helping Widows and Widowers” worksheet.
- Have children work in small groups to come up with ideas to write on their sheets. (Each person should fill out their own individual sheet.)
- When finished, have everyone return to the large group and share the ideas each group wrote on their sheets.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

AM I DOING ANYTHING TO HELP WIDOWS
OR WIDOWERS IN MY LIFE?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat*

*God is pleased that I pray
for widows and widowers.*

IDEAS FOR HELPING WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS

God instructs us in James 1:27 to care for widows.

Ideas for Caring for Widows and Widowers

How can I:

Be a friend? _____

Be thoughtful? _____

Be generous? _____

Be prayerful? _____

Resources & Materials

- Marta Felber. (2000). *Finding Your Way After Your Spouse Dies*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria
- Rabey, Lois Mowday. (2000). *When Your Soul Aches: Hope and Help for Women Who Have Lost Their Husbands*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook.
- Roper, Gayle. (2015). *A Widow's Journey: Reflections on Walking Alone*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House.