

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


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.

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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.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

**WHO WE ARE AS
A FAMILY**

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.

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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.

Psalm 103:17

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Psalm 145:4

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

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

