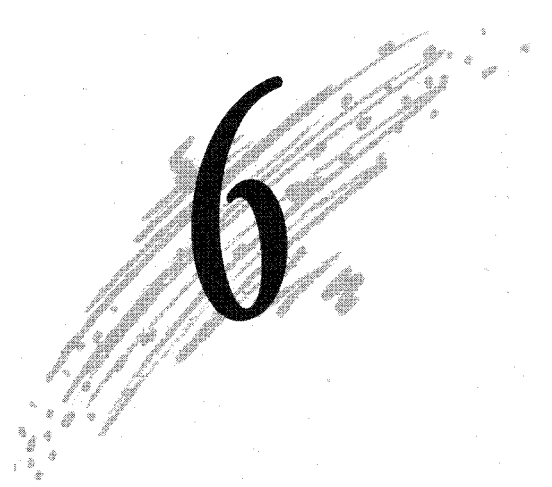


# All Kinds of Families



## LESSON AIM

To help kids learn that ★ families are important to God.

## OBJECTIVES

Kids or families will

- do family role-plays with their wrists tied together,
- learn what effect bragging and jealousy had on Joseph's family,
- explore biblical ways to solve family problems, and
- commit to showing God's love in their families.

## BIBLE BASIS

### Genesis 37:1-36

There's no such thing as a perfect family. From the very beginning of Scripture, God points out human weaknesses that led to family feuds and the tragic consequences that followed. The stories of the patriarchs are filled with scheming, jealousy, and even murder.

When we look at the story of Joseph and his brothers, we probably get a little angry with Jacob for his obvious favoritism. But think back to Jacob's family of origin. Jacob was favored by his mother, Rebekah, while Isaac preferred Esau, Jacob's twin. Rebekah and Jacob schemed together to steal Esau's birthright. Pain and dysfunction went from generation to generation in ancient times, just as they do today.

God has a better plan—a plan of forgiveness and healing.

## YOU'LL NEED

- 12-inch lengths of string or ribbon
- markers
- large paper grocery bags
- T-shirts
- sweat pants or shorts
- chocolate kisses
- towelettes or damp washcloths in sandwich bags
- scissors
- Bibles
- Bible costumes (optional)
- slips of paper
- a pencil
- photocopies of the "Funtastic Families" handout (p. 59)
- star stickers

## NOTE

This lesson works well with an intergenerational class. You may wish to invite whole families to join you for this session.

Lesson 7 will deal with Joseph's perseverance and reconciliation with his brothers.

### **Ephesians 4:29–5:1**

Unfortunately, most of us have a perverse tendency to save our worst behavior for those we love the most. These verses encourage a thoughtful, loving, forgiving mind-set. Help kids understand that home is the best place to learn to practice Christlike behavior.

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS**

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Families come in all sizes and shapes. You'll need to be careful to see that kids from every kind of family situation feel accepted and "normal" in your class.

You're probably aware that kids whose parents are divorced often feel responsible for the problems in their families. It will be especially important to tactfully protect these kids from feeling singled out in any way during this lesson.

Kids can't be responsible for what other people in their families do. But children can make a positive difference in their families by making a commitment to love, forgive, and interact positively with the people in their homes.

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## **The Lesson**

### **TEACHER TIP**

**W**arn kids not to tie their wrists together too tightly. If adults are with you for this class, it's best to use chairs for this activity. If your group is all kids, it's fine to have family groups sit on the floor.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER**

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### **Stuck Together**

As people arrive, assign them to families. Make families as small as two or three, and as large as six or seven. If you've invited whole families to an intergenerational class, scramble them so no two members of a real family end up together.

Have the families you created sit together in a circle. Distribute 12-inch lengths of string or ribbon and have family members tie their wrists together with the people on their left and right.

When all the families are tied together in their own circles, give each family a marker and a large paper grocery bag containing a T-shirt, sweat pants or shorts, several chocolate kisses, and a towelette or damp washcloth in a sandwich bag.

Say: **Decide what you want your family's last name to**

**be, then write it in big letters on your paper bag.**

Acknowledge each of the family names by saying, "Oh, here are the Joneses" or "I see we have the Oglethorpe family here today. Welcome!"

Then say: **We're about to embark on a family adventure. I'll tell you what to do. You'll find all the things you need in your handy-dandy family bag. But don't look in the bag until I tell you what you need.**

Give families this series of commands:

● **Choose one person to be the baby. Dress the baby. Take the T-shirt out of the bag and slip it over the baby's head. Then find the sweat pants or shorts and help the baby put them on.**

● **Eat breakfast. Take the chocolate kisses out of the bag. Each person will unwrap one chocolate kiss and feed it to the person on his or her left.**

● **Drive to work and school. Stand up together and walk clockwise around the room until you come back to your original spot.**

● **Drive home. Stand up together and walk counter-clockwise around the room until you come back to your original spot.**

● **Eat dinner. Unwrap a chocolate kiss and feed it to the person on your right.**

● **Clean up after dinner. Take the washcloth or tow-lette out of the sandwich bag and gently wipe the hands of the person on your left.**

After the families have completed all these activities, give an older child in each family a pair of scissors to cut the family members apart. Have families put their props back in their bags. Then gather everyone in a circle. Ask:

● **What was difficult about this activity?** (It was hard to do everything when we were all tied together.)

● **How were you able to accomplish everything I asked you to do?** (By working together; by cooperating.)

● **What happened if you couldn't agree on how to do something?** (It took us longer; we had to agree.)

● **How was this experience like what happens in your real families at home?** (We all have to work together; we have to help each other; we have to think about what other people need.)

Say: **As I watched you work in your family groups, it looked like you were having lots of fun. But sometimes you looked frustrated, and you had to work hard. It's the same with our families in real life. We have good times and hard times, and we all need to keep working together. Today we're going to learn some of what the**

Bible says about families because ★ families are important to God.

## BIBLE STUDY

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### TEACHER TIP

You may want to provide a special jacket for Joseph to wear and bathrobes as Bible-time costumes for the other characters. If you have adults in your class, you might choose adults to take the parts of the narrator and Jacob. That would free you to sit with the kids and coach the other readers.

### The Case of the Missing Brother (Genesis 37)

Set up a readers theater by placing four chairs at the corners of a large square. Choose one person to be Joseph; one to be Joseph's father, Jacob; one person to be Reuben; and one to be Judah. Ask each character to be seated in one of the chairs. Have everyone else sit in the middle of the square and take the role of the other brothers.

Say: **Let's open our Bibles to Genesis 37 to find out what happened to a very important family in the Bible. I'll be the narrator. I'll nod to the people playing Joseph, Jacob, Reuben, and Judah when it's their turn to read. The rest of you will be Joseph's other brothers. Every time you hear me read the word "brothers," say, "Mumble, mumble, mumble," as if you're angry.**

Read all of Genesis 37, cuing characters to read their parts at the appropriate times. Encourage the characters to read dramatically and add action to their parts.

After the reading, call for a big round of applause. Then ask:

● **Who do you feel sorry for in this story?** (Joseph, because he was sold as a slave; Jacob, because he lost his favorite son; the brothers, because their father played favorites.)

● **Whose fault was it that Joseph was sold as a slave?** (Joseph's, because he bragged; the brothers', because they were jealous; Jacob's, because he didn't treat all his children the same.)

Say: **When there's trouble in a family, we usually try to pin the blame on someone else. But saying it's someone else's fault doesn't solve anything. Usually everyone plays some part in the problem, just like in Joseph's family.** Ask:

● **Those of you who read special parts, what could your character have done to prevent what happened to Joseph at the end of this story?** (Jacob could have shown all his sons that he loved them; Joseph could have kept from bragging and showing off his special coat; Judah could have talked with the brothers about settling the problem a better way.)

Say: **When there's a family problem, everyone can**

work together to solve it. And that pleases God because ★ God thinks families are important.

## LIFE APPLICATION

### Pick a Fight

Write the following phrases on separate slips of paper:

- Whose turn it is to do the dishes.
- Doing homework before watching TV.
- Whether to watch a baseball game or a Disney movie.
- Whether to eat at McDonald's or Pizza Hut.
- Who gets to ride in the front seat.
- Who hogs the telephone.
- Borrowing someone's clothes without asking.
- Who's always the last one ready to go to school or church.

Have everyone re-form their family groups from the Attention Grabber. Give each family one slip of paper.

Say: **You have two minutes to prepare a family feud about what's written on your slip of paper. There are two rules. First, please don't use any bad language. Second, everyone in your family must be involved in your skit.**

After two minutes, call on families to give their skits. Give each group a hearty round of applause.

After all the groups have performed, say: **In your groups, read aloud Ephesians 4:29-5:1. Then, following the advice of those verses, plan a new ending to your skit.**

Allow about a minute for planning, then have groups perform once again.

Say: ★ **Families are important to God. That's why it's important to work together to solve problems, to show that you love each other, and to be ready to forgive.**

### TEACHER TIP

If you have adults in your class, encourage them to take the roles of children in the skits. The role reversal can be quite entertaining!

### TEACHER TIP

If you're running short of time, you may want to have family groups simply tell how their problems could be resolved rather than performing again.

## COMMITMENT

### Funtastic Families

Distribute photocopies of the "Funtastic Families" handout (p. 59). Have everyone draw or write about their real families in the center of the handout, then share with their family groups what they wrote or drew.

Say: **Now read through the funtastic-family ideas**

together and tell your family group members which idea you plan to do this week with your family at home.

## CLOSING

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### Family Affirmations

As everyone is sharing, pass out star stickers.

Say: Now take a moment to put a star sticker on each member of your family group. As you put the sticker on, say, "You're a funtastic family member because . . .," then finish the sentence with something nice you've noticed about that person.

As family groups finish their affirmations, gather everyone in a large circle for a group hug.

Pray: Lord, thank you for all the different kinds of families we represent. I pray that you'll bless each family and help us all to show your love at home. In Jesus' name, amen.

Draw or write about your family in the center of the page. Then follow this path to become a funtastic family. Put a star beside each idea you try.

# Funtastic Families

**START**

Pop popcorn together. For each kernel you eat, tell one good thing about a family member or about God.

Just before bed one night, have hot chocolate and tell each other which Bible story is your favorite and why.

Surprise someone who's tired with a tray of cookies and juice. Give that person a foot rub while he or she enjoys the treat.

Compare baby pictures of parents and children in your family. Who looks most alike? How are you alike in other ways?

Plan a "You're Special" night for each family member.

Have the special person's favorite food for dinner, then play his or her favorite game.

Purchase a package of self-stick notes and divide them among family members. Leave a happy secret message for each family member each day for a week.

For dessert one night, set a bowl of chocolate kisses in the middle of the table. For each kiss you take, tell one thing you're thankful for.

