

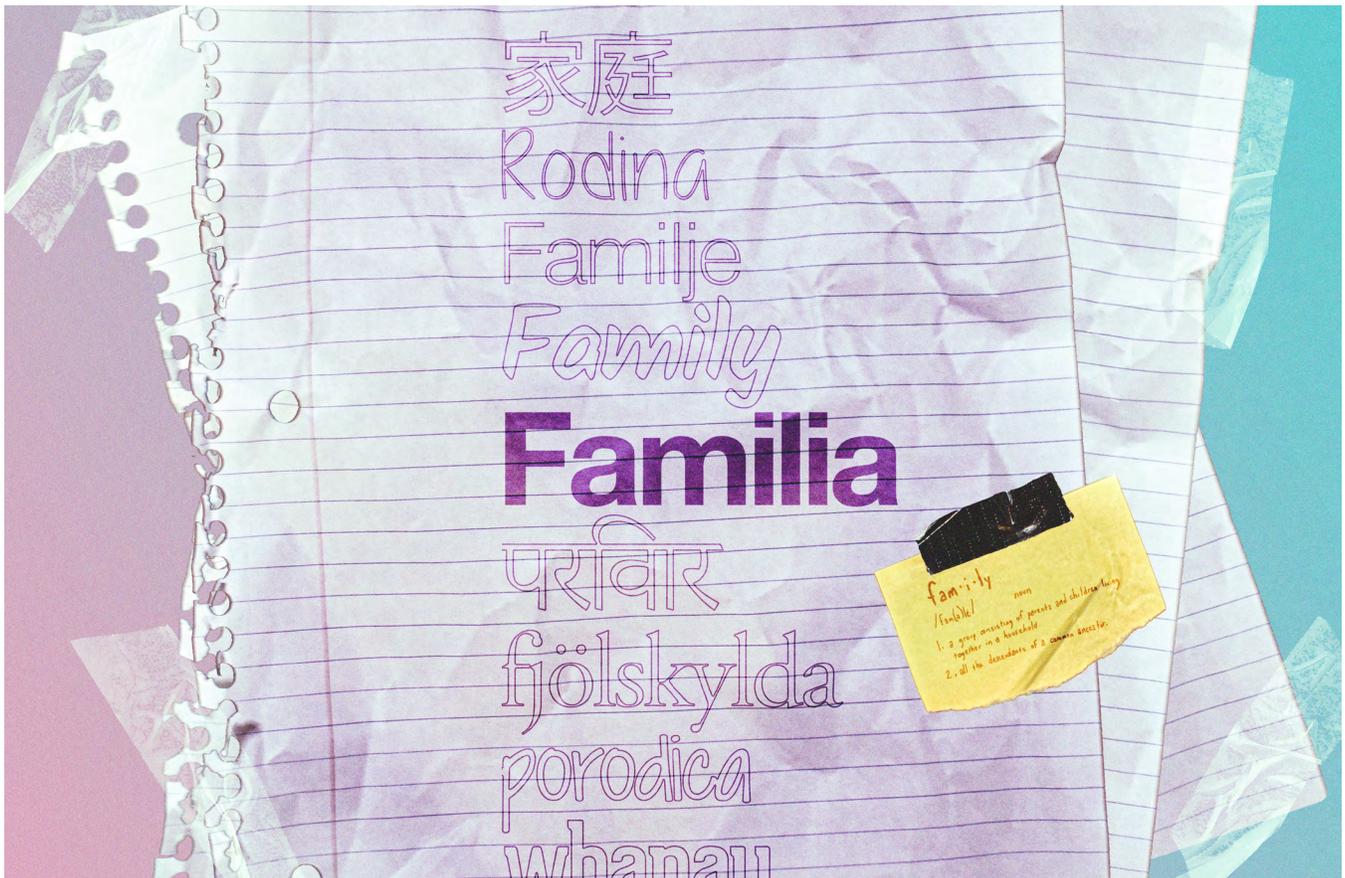


A 4-WEEK SERIES FROM THE EPISTLES ON

# FAMILY

FROM OUR ANNUAL **TEACHING STRATEGY**

BY JASMINE MURIAS



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All aspects of Grow Curriculum and Strategy (including all images, language, resources, and related products) are owned by Stuff You Can Use. Stuff You Can Use gives permission to the organization that purchased this resource to download, print, and use its components for its use only. No part of Grow Curriculum and Strategy may be copied, shared, resold, or republished outside of that organization in any way, except in the case of brief quotations or product reviews that credit and link back to Grow Curriculum and Strategy ([growcurriculum.org](http://growcurriculum.org)). Reproducing any of this material or incorporating it into a new work that does not follow these guidelines (including a blog post, podcast, video, or other resource) is a violation of U.S. copyright laws. Stuff You Can Use is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for us to earn fees by linking to Amazon.com and affiliated sites.

## OVERVIEW



### STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

#### THIS SERIES

- ▶ [About This Series](#)
- ▶ [Room Design, Music, and Games](#)
- ▶ [How to Prepare for This Series](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Middle Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for High Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Students with Special Needs](#)
- ▶ [About the Author](#)
- ▶ [Devotional for Volunteers](#)

#### MULTIMEDIA

- ▶ [Graphics & Video](#)
- ▶ [Spotify Playlists](#)

#### COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Weekly Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Monthly Family Email](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Scripts & Videos](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Plan](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)

### STUFF FOR EACH WEEK

#### WEEK 1

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)

#### WEEK 2

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 3

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 4

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It's not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well – we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we'll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God's family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God's family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

## THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

### WEEK 1

This week, we'll see what Paul advised the church of Galatia to do when they were busy arguing and fault-finding with each other.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** In God's family we support each other.
- **THE BIBLE:** Galatians 5:13–14 & 22-23, 6:1–3 & 9-10; Matthew 11:28–30
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Question, Story, Poll, Activity, Image, Object Lesson, Discussion

### WEEK 2

This week, we'll see what Paul challenged the Colossians and Thessalonians to pray for on each other's behalf.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** In God's family we pray for each other.
- **THE BIBLE:** Colossians 1:1–14; I Thessalonians 5:16–18; Philippians 4:6
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Question, Story, Poll, Response, Prayer, Discussion

### WEEK 3

This week, we'll see how Jesus' work to reconcile with us should lead us to working toward reconciliation with others.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** In God's family we reconcile with each other.
- **THE BIBLE:** Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21–22; Hebrews 12:14
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Poll, Question, Activity, Story, Response, Discussion

### WEEK 4

This week, we'll see how and why the apostle John challenged the early followers of Jesus to love each other well.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** In God's family we love each other.
- **THE BIBLE:** I John 3:16-18, 4:7–12; John 15:9–17; I Corinthians 13:4-7
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Video, Story, Response, Discussion

## HOW TO PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

Outside of your teaching time, we have a few programming ideas to help this series really come to life – everything from how to **design your room**, to which **games to play**, to what **music to play and sing**.

 **ROOM DESIGN**

For this series, we're making a family photo wall! While you could make this photo wall entirely from "awkward family photos" you find on the internet, try mixing it up by **incorporating real (and awkward) family photos of your students' and volunteers' families**. To do that, you'll need to ask them to submit photos in advance so you can get them printed, framed, and hung.

First, you'll need a backdrop. There are tons of ways to create a backdrop that you can re-use multiple times each year. Check out [this post](#) for a list of ideas. For this series, **we recommend using large panels of plywood or wooden pallets so your picture frames can be nailed securely into the backdrop**. Once you've got your backdrop, you could cover it in paper or wallpaper, or you could spray paint the backdrop using pink, purple, and turquoise spray paint to imitate the background of the series graphic.

When that's done, you'll need tons of "awkward family photos" – you can find these with a quick Google search! Print them and frame them with frames sourced from a thrift store. If you don't love the mismatched look of this, spray paint all the frames white to get some visual consistency. Don't forget to add photos submitted by your students and volunteers, if you have them! Nail these to the wooden backdrop.

And for a final touch, add [cardboard letters](#) that spell "family" at the top – you're trying to channel some of your favorite mom's interior design skills for this project. (A dozen "[Live, Laugh, Love](#)" signs are optional but, uh, maybe not recommended.)



## GRAPHIC DESIGN

We give you editable graphics so you can make everything your own! If you're going to **edit our graphics** or **create something brand new . . .**

Use this font!

# HELVETICA NEUE BOLD

Download this font [here!](#)

And use these colors!

 HEX #E48FD0  
CMYK: 11/51/0/0

 HEX #A82CA9  
CMYK: 43/91/0/0

 HEX #F5E766  
CMYK: 6/3/73/0

## MUSIC

In addition to any music you might see woven throughout your teaching time, you'll probably want to have a time of worship with your students.

Here are a few worship songs that tie into our discussions about the complexity and difficulties of our families . . .

- **"House of Miracles"** (Brandon Lake)
- **"The Blessing"** (Cody Carnes, Elevation Worship, and Kari Jobe)
- **"Love Changes Everything"** (Red Rocks Worship)
- **"Never Alone"** (Tori Kelly & Kirk Franklin)
- **"Won't Let Me Down"** (Jonathan Traylor)
- **"House Of The Lord"** (Phil Wickham)
- **"Anything is Possible"** (Elevation Worship & Dante Bowe)
- **"All Belong Here"** (The Many)
- **"By Our Love"** (Christy Nockels)
- **"The Father's House"** (Cory Asbury)

We've added these songs to our [Grow Students \(Volume 5\) Spotify playlist](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)

And if you want to sing or sample a non-worship song or two (maybe as an opener, a closer, a bonus song during your program), try some of these . . .

- **"Family"** (The Chainsmokers & Kygo)
- **"We Are Family"** (Sister Sledge)
- **"Family"** (Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors)
- **"Hey Brother"** (Avicii)
- **"Lean on Me"** (Bill Withers)
- **"I'll Be There"** (The Jackson 5)
- **"Brother"** (NEEDTOBREATHE)

For more fun (and clean) song suggestions, check out all of [our Spotify playlists](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)



## GAMES by Jeremiah Herring & Tyler Grant

If you have a designated time for games before your worship and teaching time, we have a few suggestions for games you can play . . .

- [Join The Familia](#)
- [I'm Telling](#)
- [The Fictional Family](#)
- [Bet The Fam!](#)

Since this series is all about family, the games we recommend for this series all are about family too. To get the instructions and graphics for each game, click the links or visit the Games section of your Grow Students dashboard.

### HOW TO PREP FOR THIS SERIES

## WHAT TO GET

If you want to try all of our suggestions for this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

### WEEK 1:

- A table
- A tablecloth
- Two identical sets of groceries
- Tape
- A timer
- A ladder

### WEEK 2:

- A phone or other device that can be mirrored to your screen
- The handouts provided in your Week 2 folder
- [Perforated note cards](#) or card stock
- [Binder rings](#)
- Pens

### WEEK 3:

- A phone or other device that can be mirrored to your screen
- The handouts provided in your Week 3 folder

### WEEK 4:

- [Note cards](#)
- A large bowl
- A black marker
- Paper
- Miscellaneous objects or photos of objects
- A video clip from your favorite cheesy love story
- A short clip from a video [like this one](#) (2:06-2:10) of someone demonstrating how to say "family" in American Sign Language
- A short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:17-0:40) of a little boy who rescued his younger sister from a dog attack
- The handout provided in your Week 4 folder

## WHAT TO MAKE

### WEEK 1:

- For the activity Get the Groceries, set the two identical piles of groceries on the table, cover them with the table cloth, and mark a finish line with tape.
- Recruit an adult and two trusted students to hold the ladder during your object lesson.

### WEEK 2:

- In the days leading up to your teaching time, poll your students to find out which songs are getting them hyped up right now. Make a playlist of around five of those songs.
- For The Daily Prayer Challenge, print and assemble the prayer card booklets provided in your downloads. The handout provided is designed to be printed on perforated note cards [like these](#), or printed on card stock and cut into eight equal rectangles. Print one copy for each student and perforate or cut the cards. Assemble the booklets by putting the cover card on top and the daily cards in order behind the cover. Start with whichever day of the week you do your weekly program – the challenge should begin that night. When the cards are in order, hole punch them in the top left corner and string them on a [binder ring](#). Place one booklet under each seat, along with a pen.

### WEEK 3:

- Print the handout provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.

### WEEK 4:

- For the Rapped in Love activity, on each note card, write a variety of randomly selected words (cheddar, money, bread, mommy, nobody, gossip, circus, tsunami, tacos), and place the cards into the bowl.
- For the Love It or Hate It activity, write these phrases on five different pieces of paper: "Love It," "Kind of Love It," "It's Okay," "Don't Love It," and "Hate It." Prepare a selection of five different items or photos per student you'd like to participate, like pizza, money, a phone, a picture of a family, baby animals, textbooks, vegetables, or ice cream.
- Print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 4 folder. Place one under each seat.

## WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so there are probably some things you'd like to change about this series before you start teaching. Here's what you'll need to update if you make changes . . .

- **TEACHING:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group. You can edit each message using the Word documents provided or the [Grow Message Builder](#).
- **SMALL GROUP:** If you make any changes to your teaching, make sure your small group questions reflect those changes. You can edit these using the Word documents provided.
- **APP:** If you make changes to your teaching or small group questions, don't forget to update your content in the [Grow App](#) for your team!
- **GRAPHICS:** We've provided graphics in your [Graphics & Video folder](#) already, but we've also provided a blank slide in case you need to make your own.
- **EMAILS:** Customize and send the [volunteer and family emails](#) we've provided for this series.

---

## WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your students, volunteers, and families are in the loop . . .

- **STUDENTS:** Throughout the month, post the [Graphics & Video](#) we've provided on social media, like the Big Idea images and Bumper Video. Post the [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) we've provided or use the One-Minute Sermon Scripts to film a recap video each week and post it on social media.
- **FAMILIES:** Before you begin teaching this series, send families the [Parent Email](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). After each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to families online. You can also copy and paste the social media examples we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Before you teach each week of this series, send volunteers the weekly [Volunteer Emails](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). Before each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to volunteers online. You can also copy and paste the social media posts we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).

For a more in-depth digital communication strategy, **customize the [Social Media Plan spreadsheet](#)** we've provided. And hey! When you post on social media, **don't forget to use the [#growcurriculum](#) hashtag** to share your ideas and stories with our team and with other churches who are using Grow!

## HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with special needs, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique and diverse audience.

## HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

 by Mike Sheley, Porfirio Caldera

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for kids with special needs, here's what to adjust . .

- **In Week 1, add a brief time of response.** Many middle schoolers may have a difficult time imagining how their family members might be struggling or identifying it when they are. If their family dynamics are fairly stable, this might be even more difficult for them. To give your middle schoolers something more concrete to do and apply this week, hand out blank note cards and encourage them to write a note of encouragement to someone in their family, whether that person is struggling or not. Remind them they can be supportive to their family members even when their family members aren't struggling!
- **In Weeks 2 and 3, prepare your middle schoolers before the The Language of Family activity.** Depending on your students' life experiences and the diversity of your community, some of your middle schoolers may not approach other languages and cultures with the curiosity and sensitivity you'd like for them to have. Be sure to introduce this activity both weeks by letting them know it's challenging and interesting to learn a new language. Redirect or gently correct them if they begin to mock or joke about other languages or cultures.



### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

- **In Week 4, replace the video of a boy saving his sister from a dog attack with personal stories.** There's a chance some of your younger middle schoolers could be confused by this example. To love their family members, do they need to literally save their lives? To make this more concrete for your middle schoolers, replace this video with more everyday stories from you and other volunteers on your team about how your family members have loved each other with your actions.



### REMEMBER

Remember a middle schooler's family can be a source of big tension for some students, but not at all for others. While some families will be fairly stable, other families often experience major changes when their kids reach middle school. Parents get divorced, families move to new places, and middle schoolers' developing brains and bodies put them in an emotionally vulnerable and confusing place. Be sure to emphasize that no family is perfect and it's okay that their families are exactly the way they are!

## HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS by Travis Bannon, Jada Price

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for kids with special needs, here's what to adjust . . .

- **In Week 2, revise your prayer time to ask students to pray for each other's families.** After your students have prayed silently for their own families, consider giving high schoolers a moment practice praying for each other in pairs or small groups.
- **In Week 3, plan to spend more time talking about complicated, abusive, or dangerous family situations than you would with middle schoolers.** Your discussion questions for high schoolers are already written in a way that prompts them to explore this idea more deeply, so follow those prompts! It's an important and nuanced conversation your high schoolers need to have.

### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

- **In all four weeks, replace your personal stories with stories from your students.** Having high school students talk about their families (and what they've learned or struggled with) will give your students more connection to and ownership over the message — and it will make other students listen more intently too! But don't put anyone on the spot. Recruit a student to share a story at least a week in advance and work with them to make sure the story they want to tell is well-crafted and clear.
- **In any of the four weeks, replace the opening activities with more discussion time.** There's a good chance your high schoolers will have a lot they want to process about their families in conversation. If that's true, feel free to skip over some of the introductory pieces and get straight to the point! This will save more time at the end for more in-depth discussion.

### REMEMBER

Remember, the topic of family will be difficult for some of your high schoolers whose stories and situations have been painful. As you prepare for this series, think about the specific scenarios you're aware of and look for ways to speak about them specifically (without making it evident who you're talking about). Make it a point to show your students who are hurting that you are with them and aware of what they're experiencing.

# HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

by Alyssa Roberts, Sunny Brown

## REVISE

To make this series more accessible for kids with special needs, here's what to adjust . . .

- **In Week 2, revise the Mood Swing activity to accommodate those with hearing impairments.** Instead of only playing songs, try having students dance to the songs you play, or show the lyrics or music videos of songs you play — with closed captioning turned on!
- **In Weeks 2 and 3, add images to the The Language of Family activity.** For students with certain kinds of special needs, concrete images will help them understand and remember abstract ideas. In addition to showing Google Translate on your screen, consider adding photos of families in the countries where those languages are spoken for an additional visual aid.
- **In all 4 weeks, add images to your polls and discussion questions about emotions.** For some students with special needs, identifying or talking about their emotions could be a challenge. To help, print out large pictures of emojis or photos of people representing the emotion or mood you are talking about. You can use those images as a visual aid as you teach and students can use them to respond to your questions.

## REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

- **Replace any insensitive words you typically say with something more inclusive.** When we talk about our families, it's easy to throw around playful insults like, "They're crazy! He's so dumb. She's so lame." But it's important to pay attention to how these words are actually based on special needs or disabilities your students (or their family members) might actually have. As you prepare for this series, it's a good opportunity to evaluate some of the language you tend to use and get curious about how those words might be heard and experienced by certain students.

## REMEMBER

Remember students with special needs may have unique circumstances with family. In addition to their blood relatives, they might also have full-time care takers and extended family who live with or spend lots of time with them.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jasmine Murias has been in youth ministry for over 10 years. Including rebuilding a youth ministry from scratch starting with almost no students to an auditorium full of students. She now stays home with my 4-year-old but still continues to serve in the ministry I love. As many of you may know Youth Ministry is a way of life. If you'd like to chat with Jasmine about thriving as a Latina in ministry, nurturing your creativity in Ministry, or where to find the best coffee in Florida, she would love to connect with you!

## CONNECT WITH JASMINE!



## ALONG WITH . . .



**SERIES DEVELOPMENT:** Jasmine Murias, Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Amber Stephens, Stephen Switzer, Candace Williams, Jack Grimes, Duane Reimer, Bianca Quezada, Steph Whitacre

**HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS:** Mike Sheley, Porfirio Caldera

**HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS:** Travis Bannon, Jada Price

**HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Alyssa Roberts, Sunny Brown

**GAMES:** Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant, Jordan Floro

**ONE-MINUTE SERMONS:** David Magallanes, Elle Campbell, Jose Rodriguez, Erica Rodriguez, Vanessa Serrano Cruz, Damean Easter, and the Rescue a Generation team

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Amber Gaddis

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Linda Moon, Ali Anne, Kellee Gentry, Emily Acton, Jada Smith, Jay Logan, Eddie Irvin, Daniel Wallis

# DEVOTIONAL FOR VOLUNTEERS



## STUDY

What do you think of when you hear the word "family"? It can conjure all sorts of ideas and emotions because all of us come from different types of families. What's really incredible is that no matter what the word family means in our biological world, the word family can mean something entirely different in our spiritual world. We don't have to have a genetic connection to have a family connection. In God's family, **we support each other, pray for each other, and can be reconciled to each other.** Put simply, God's family is a place where **we can love each other.** To get ready for this series on the topic of family, **spend a few minutes reading the stories you'll be teaching students this month.** As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

**WEEK 1:** In God's family we support each other. (Galatians 5:13-14 & 22-23, 6:1-3 & 9-10; Matthew 11:28-30)

**WEEK 2:** In God's family we pray for each other. (Colossians 1:1-14; I Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6)

**WEEK 3:** In God's family we reconcile with each other. (Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21-22; Hebrews 12:14)

**WEEK 4:** In God's family, we love each other. (I John 3:16-18, 4:7-12; John 15:9-17; I Corinthians 13:4-7)

## PRAY

Tell God how you feel about the family you were in or the families you were around while growing up. Take a few minutes to admit the ways family hurt you, or ways you hurt your family. Give God a chance to help you heal from past hurts and give you the courage to be a part of God's family in a powerful way.

**Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now?** Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.

## GROW

What are some ways you can **support each other, pray for each other, and can be reconciled to each other?** Think about your friends, community, people you lead or are led by. God's family is a place where **we can love each other.** Practice loving someone in your spiritual family by noticing who those people are and wondering about their needs! So, what's your next step? **Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.**

## WEEK 1 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we support each other.

### THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:13-14 & 22-23, 6:1-3 & 9-10;  
Matthew 11:28-30

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### QUESTION | "What's your most annoying household chore?"

- Welcome to *Familia*, a new series that's all about family – the good, the bad, and the annoying. **In your home, what's your most annoying household chore and why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

#### STORY | Talk about a chore you hated doing as a teenager.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or have a volunteer or student tell a story) about a chore you hated doing as a teenager – and be dramatic! This is your chance to whine, complain, and try to get a few laughs.*

#### POLL | "What's your grocery strategy?"

- Does anyone love grocery shopping? We all love *having* groceries, but the process of getting them, carrying them, and putting them away is annoying. No matter how many pounds of groceries I buy, you can guarantee I will try to carry them inside my place with just one trip.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students reply to the following questions by raising their hands or cheering.*
- **How about you? What's your grocery strategy? Do you . . .**
  - Grab all the groceries at once, no matter how many bags there are?
  - Think it's better to go slow and take a few trips?
  - Run for the bathroom to hide in hopes the job will be finished before you come out?

## ACTIVITY | Get the Groceries

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need a table, a tablecloth, two identical sets of groceries that are heavy, bulky, or weirdly shaped, tape to mark the finish line, and a timer. Before your teaching time, set the two identical piles of groceries on the table, cover them with the table cloth, and mark a finish line with tape. To play, a team of one person will need to race a team of four people to the finish line without dropping any of their groceries. First, call a team of four to the front and assign them the first set of groceries. Next, ask anyone if they think they could beat the team of four single-handedly. When the race begins, the players must grab all their groceries and carry them to finish line. This activity can be used as simply a demonstration where the single player has no chance of winning, but if you'd like it to be a competitive game instead:
  - Tell the single player they can carry as many items as they want at a time.
  - Tell the team of four they can each only carry one item at a time, so they'll need to run back and forth until all their groceries are moved.
  - If the single player drops any items, they can pick them up after they've delivered the rest of their groceries.
- While it may sometimes feel like we can handle things on our own, there's a lot of benefit to having other people around to help and support us. That's what our families are meant to do.
- Family can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Your family could be . . .
  - The people you live with.
  - The people you're related to.
  - The people you've chosen to love like family.
  - It could even be the family of God — people all over the world, and all throughout history, who follow Jesus.
- We're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but you'll learn it in a few more languages too by the time we're done.
  - Think of it as a reminder that no matter who we are, where we live, what language we speak, or what circumstances we were born into, we all need "family."
  - Sometimes we choose our family and sometimes we don't get a choice. But no matter what "family" looks like for you, for the next few weeks, we're going to see what Scripture shows us about getting along with our families a bit better.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## STORY | Talk about a time you blew up at your family.

- When I said families are supposed to support each other, of course, I didn't only mean on a grocery run. You might need support when you're feeling . . .
  - Discouraged or let down.
  - Stressed out.
  - Sad.
  - Angry.
  - Confused or unsure.

- When we're feeling weighed down, it can be hard to ask for the support we need. When we're not sure how to deal with it or ask for help, it's easy to take things out on the people who are closest to us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you blew up at your family because of a burden you'd been trying to carry on your own. Share what burdens you were carrying (like stress at school, conflict in one of your friendships, or the stress that comes with life changes like graduation or puberty) and how you took it out on your family. Then share what you wish you had communicated and what support you needed.*
- No matter what burden you're carrying, it's always better to ask for support than to try to handle it on your own. That's because you and I were designed to need each other!

### ACTIVITY | Family Photos

- I'm sure we can all think of moments when a family member gave us the support we needed during a tough time. And I'm sure we can all think of moments when that didn't happen. But today I don't want us to think about own needs. I want us to think about others.
  - Is there anyone in your family who might need support right now? Someone who might be feeling discouraged, stressed, sad, angry, confused, or unsure?
  - If you can't think of anyone, why do you think that is? Is it because everyone's life is totally perfect? Or is it just because you haven't thought about it recently?
- I know it can be difficult to feel compassionate or curious about our own family — especially the family members who are sometimes hard to like. But today, that's what I want to challenge you to do. **Who in your family might need some support right now?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite your students to take out their phones and scroll through their camera roll for a picture of someone in their family or community who might need support. Encourage them to favorite the photo or make it their lock screen.*

### SCRIPTURE | Galatians 5:13–14

- Believe it or not, we can learn a lot about families (and family drama) from the Bible!
- Today we're going to look at a passage from the book of Galatians. Galatians was originally a letter, sent to a group of Jesus-followers in Galatia from a guy named Paul. In this particular letter, Paul was talking to a church family that had a few disagreements and conflict.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 5:13-14.*
- Hopefully your family doesn't actually bite each other when you're stressed out or angry, but you get the idea. This church family was getting so consumed by their disagreements with each other that Paul needed to jump in and correct them. He told them to . . .
  - Love each other like they love themselves.
  - Put each other before themselves.
  - Stop hurting each other.

### SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:1–3

- It turns out a big part of the reason the Galatians were always fighting with each other was because they were busy getting angry about each other's faults. They would notice someone else's sins or shortcomings and jump all over them for it.
  - Think about your family for a second. Does that sound familiar? When one of your family members does something to make you angry, is your first reaction to blow up at them and point out their flaws?
  - What if, instead of attacking or getting angry with them, you stopped to consider, "I wonder if they need some support right now?"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:1-3.*
- In a conflict, it is so easy for us to only think about ourselves, or to think about how the other person has wronged us. But just like we sometimes do things we regret when we need support, our family does too.
- When you notice a family member messing up, here's what Paul recommends . . .
  - Be gentle.
  - Work to make things better.
  - Help carry their burdens.
  - Don't think you're better than them.

### SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:9-10

- If you've ever struggled to do this for a family member (and who hasn't?) then these instructions from Paul might sound pretty difficult. That's why Paul says we need help from God's Spirit to . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:9-10.*
- Supporting each other (especially when we'd rather be mad at each other) is hard, tiring work. But Paul says not to give up and to keep supporting each other.
- Paul was talking about how to love each other in God's family of Jesus-followers, but this matters for our actual families too. No matter what you or your family members believe about Jesus, imagine how things in your family might change if you decided to support your loved ones instead of attack them.

### SCRIPTURE | Matthew 11:28–30

- But it can be hard to support others when we don't feel supported ourselves. If you've been there, listen to what Jesus says.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 11:28–30.*
- No matter how awesome our family or friends are, they still can't give us the care and rest that Jesus can. In him, we can find the strength we need to carry not just our own burdens, but to help carry the burdens of others as well.
- Just like Jesus loves us by giving us rest when we're burdened, Paul says we can love each other by "carrying each other's burdens" too. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**OBJECT LESSON | Partner Ladder Climb**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you'll need a ladder, another adult and two students. Lift the ladder from the ground and (ensuring nobody is in your way) wobble around a bit to show how challenging it is to hold up on your own. As you teach, ask the other adult to join you in stabilizing the ladder. Then ask two students to help as well. Lean the ladder against something sturdy and ask them to hold it in place as you climb up and down.*
- When we try to carry a burden alone it can be hard — sometimes almost impossible. But when other people help, the burden becomes lighter and easier to manage.
  - Sometimes the burdens our family members are carrying are stress, hurt, fear, or grief. Sometimes the burdens they're carrying are the mistakes they've made. But in all of those situations, they don't need us to abandon them. They need us to help support them.
  - You can be the kind of person who helps support your family members when they need you. You can be a source of strength, stability, peace, and rest — a reflection of what Jesus does for you.

**4 WAYS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER**

- Maybe you still need a few practical tips on how to support each other. If you choose to live these out in your home, your family relationships could change in big ways. When a family member needs support . . .
  - **ENCOURAGE THEM.** You can't support someone if you can't even encourage them. Think about a time when you were at a low point in your life or you were struggling with something, and someone encouraged you or reminded you who you really are. Did it change anything? Did it help you feel supported? Encouragement can go a long way, but we definitely don't do it as often as we could.
  - **BELIEVE THE BEST.** This step may be one of the hardest. Some of you have walked through awful circumstances or been really hurt by a family member. When that happens, it's easy to assume our family members will never change or that they're intentionally hurting us. But if you want your family to believe the best about you, try going first by believing the best about them. The more you do, the more likely you'll be to look past their outbursts and mistakes and be able to see both their good intentions and the ways they need your support.
  - **BE TRUSTWORTHY.** It isn't easy to trust your family when they've broken your trust, let you down, or disappointed you. You can't make your family worthy of your trust, but you can make sure you're worthy of theirs. Modeling trustworthiness can change the dynamics of your family in big ways.

- **TRUST GOD.** Your family members will continue making mistakes. So will you. But when you make it a habit to trust God with the burdens you and your family are carrying, you'll quickly see there is nothing too big or too difficult for Jesus to carry. No matter how big the burden, Jesus has got it.
- These steps can make a big difference in your relationships and in your family, but I'll be honest — they can't fix everything. Not every family conflict is simple or easily resolved.
  - If your family conflicts feel so big you're not sure they'll ever be fixed, bring that burden to Jesus. Do what you can do support your family, but remember, it's not your responsibility to fix everyone else's problems. It's not possible!
  - Or if your doesn't have any major problems right now, that's great! Your loved ones may not be carrying huge burdens right now, but you still have the opportunity to love and support them in small but very important ways.
- Your family may not look like the families of the people sitting next to you, or of your friends, or of the families you see in movies. But that's okay. No matter what your family looks like, God still wants to work in your family.
- And remember, you're not alone. Your "family" can include a lot of people — including people you've chosen to love like family, like the people in this room. We're here to support you as you look for ways to support your family. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God’s family we support each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:13–14 & 22-23, 6:1–3 & 9-10;  
Matthew 11:28–30

- Describe your family in one word. Now say more!
- Who do you consider your family?
- When’s the last time you blew up at your family? What burdens were you carrying that led up to that moment?
- How could your family have supported you better that day? What could you have done differently too?
- What are some of the things our family members might sometimes struggle with that we don’t know about?
- Why do you think it’s so easy for us to notice our family members’ faults? What do you think they would say about your faults?
- Instead of getting angry at a family member’s faults, what do you think would happen if we saw those problems as burdens we could help them carry?
- When you notice a family member’s faults, what would it look like to follow Paul’s instructions to *gently* help them make it right?
- Read Galatians 5:22-2. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better support your family?
- This week, how can you better support one person in your family?

#### ACTIVITY

Show your "support" for each other by building a human pyramid and taking a group photo!

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we support each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:13–14 & 22-23, 6:1–3 & 9-10;  
Matthew 11:28–30

- Describe your family in one word. Now say more!
- Who do you consider your family?
- What are some of the things our family members might sometimes struggle with that we don't know about?
- Instead of getting angry at a family member's faults, what do you think would happen if we saw those problems as burdens we could help them carry?
- Read Galatians 5:22-23. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better support your family?
- This week, how can you better support one person in your family?

#### ACTIVITY

Show your "support" for each other by building a human pyramid and taking a group photo!

## WEEK 1 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we support each other.

### THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:13-14 & 22-23, 6:1-3 & 9-10;  
Matthew 11:28-30

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### QUESTION | "What's your most annoying household chore?"

- Welcome to *Familia*, a new series that's all about family – the good, the bad, and the annoying. **In your home, what's your most annoying household chore and why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

#### STORY | Talk about a chore you hated doing as a teenager.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or have a volunteer or student tell a story) about a chore you hated doing as a teenager – and be dramatic! This is your chance to whine, complain, and try to get a few laughs.

#### POLL | "What's your grocery strategy?"

- Does anyone love grocery shopping? We all love *having* groceries, but the process of getting them, carrying them, and putting them away is annoying. No matter how many pounds of groceries I buy, you can guarantee I will try to carry them inside my place with just one trip.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have students reply to the following questions by raising their hands or cheering.
- **How about you? What's your grocery strategy? Do you . . .**
  - Grab all the groceries at once, no matter how many bags there are?
  - Think it's better to go slow and take a few trips?
  - Run for the bathroom to hide in hopes the job will be finished before you come out?

## ACTIVITY | Get the Groceries

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a table, a tablecloth, two identical sets of groceries that are heavy, bulky, or weirdly shaped, tape to mark the finish line, and a timer. Before your teaching time, set the two identical piles of groceries on the table, cover them with the table cloth, and mark a finish line with tape. To play, a team of one person will need to race a team of four people to the finish line without dropping any of their groceries. First, call a team of four to the front and assign them the first set of groceries. Next, ask anyone if they think they could beat the team of four single-handedly. When the race begins, the players must grab all their groceries and carry them to finish line. This activity can be used as simply a demonstration where the single player has no chance of winning, but if you'd like it to be a competitive game instead:*
  - *Tell the single player they can carry as many items as they want at a time.*
  - *Tell the team of four they can each only carry one item at a time, so they'll need to run back and forth until all their groceries are moved.*
  - *If the single player drops any items, they can pick them up after they've delivered the rest of their groceries.*
- While it may sometimes feel like we can handle things on our own, there's a lot of benefit to having other people around to help and support us. That's what our families are meant to do.
- Family can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Your family could be . . .
  - The people you live with.
  - The people you're related to.
  - The people you've chosen to love like family.
  - It could even be the family of God — people all over the world, and all throughout history, who follow Jesus.
- We're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but you'll learn it in a few more languages too by the time we're done.
  - Think of it as a reminder that no matter who we are, where we live, what language we speak, or what circumstances we were born into, we all need "family."
  - Sometimes we choose our family and sometimes we don't get a choice. But no matter what "family" looks like for you, for the next few weeks, we're going to see what Scripture shows us about getting along with our families a bit better.

## SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Describe your family in one word. Now say more!**
  - **Who do you consider your family?**

## STORY | Talk about a time you blew up at your family.

- When I said families are supposed to support each other, of course, I didn't only mean on a grocery run. You might need support when you're feeling . . .
  - Discouraged or let down.
  - Stressed out.
  - Sad.
  - Angry.
  - Confused or unsure.
- When we're feeling weighed down, it can be hard to ask for the support we need. When we're not sure how to deal with it or ask for help, it's easy to take things out on the people who are closest to us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you blew up at your family because of a burden you'd been trying to carry on your own. Share what burdens you were carrying (like stress at school, conflict in one of your friendships, or the stress that comes with life changes like graduation or puberty) and how you took it out on your family. Then share what you wish you had communicated and what support you needed.*
- No matter what burden you're carrying, it's always better to ask for support than to try to handle it on your own. That's because you and I were designed to need each other!

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ★ **When's the last time you blew up at your family? What burdens were you carrying that led up to that moment?**
  - ★ **How could your family have supported you better that day? What could you have done differently too?**
  - **What are some of the things our family members might sometimes struggle with that we don't know about?**

## ACTIVITY | Family Photos

- I'm sure we can all think of moments when a family member gave us the support we needed during a tough time. And I'm sure we can all think of moments when that didn't happen. But today I don't want us to think about own needs. I want us to think about others.
  - Is there anyone in your family who might need support right now? Someone who might be feeling discouraged, stressed, sad, angry, confused, or unsure?
  - If you can't think of anyone, why do you think that is? Is it because everyone's life is totally perfect? Or is it just because you haven't thought about it recently?
- I know it can be difficult to feel compassionate or curious about our own family — especially the family members who are sometimes hard to like. But today, that's what I want to challenge you to do. **Who in your family might need some support right now?**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite your students to take out their phones and scroll through their camera roll for a picture of someone in their family or community who might need support. Encourage them to favorite the photo or make it their lock screen.*

## SCRIPTURE | Galatians 5:13–14

- Believe it or not, we can learn a lot about families (and family drama) from the Bible!
- Today we're going to look at a passage from the book of Galatians. Galatians was originally a letter, sent to a group of Jesus-followers in Galatia from a guy named Paul. In this particular letter, Paul was talking to a church family that had a few disagreements and conflict.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 5:13-14.*
- Hopefully your family doesn't actually bite each other when you're stressed out or angry, but you get the idea. This church family was getting so consumed by their disagreements with each other that Paul needed to jump in and correct them. He told them to . . .
  - Love each other like they love themselves.
  - Put each other before themselves.
  - Stop hurting each other.

## SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:1–3

- It turns out a big part of the reason the Galatians were always fighting with each other was because they were busy getting angry about each other's faults. They would notice someone else's sins or shortcomings and jump all over them for it.
  - Think about your family for a second. Does that sound familiar? When one of your family members does something to make you angry, is your first reaction to blow up at them and point out their flaws?
  - What if, instead of attacking or getting angry with them, you stopped to consider, "I wonder if they need some support right now?"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:1-3.*
- In a conflict, it is so easy for us to only think about ourselves, or to think about how the other person has wronged us. But just like we sometimes do things we regret when we need support, our family does too.
- When you notice a family member messing up, here's what Paul recommends . . .
  - Be gentle.
  - Work to make things better.
  - Help carry their burdens.
  - Don't think you're better than them.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ★ **Why do you think it's so easy for us to notice our family members' faults? What do you think they would say about your faults?**

- **Instead of getting angry at a family member's faults, what do you think would happen if we saw those problems as burdens we could help them carry?**

### SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:9-10

- If you've ever struggled to do this for a family member (and who hasn't?) then these instructions from Paul might sound pretty difficult. That's why Paul says we need help from God's Spirit to . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:9-10.*
- Supporting each other (especially when we'd rather be mad at each other) is hard, tiring work. But Paul says not to give up and to keep supporting each other.
- Paul was talking about how to love each other in God's family of Jesus-followers, but this matters for our actual families too. No matter what you or your family members believe about Jesus, imagine how things in your family might change if you decided to support your loved ones instead of attack them.

### SCRIPTURE | Matthew 11:28-30

- But it can be hard to support others when we don't feel supported ourselves. If you've been there, listen to what Jesus says.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 11:28-30.*
- No matter how awesome our family or friends are, they still can't give us the care and rest that Jesus can. In him, we can find the strength we need to carry not just our own burdens, but to help carry the burdens of others as well.
- Just like Jesus loves us by giving us rest when we're burdened, Paul says we can love each other by "carrying each other's burdens" too. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

### OBJECT LESSON | Partner Ladder Climb

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you'll need a ladder, another adult and two students. Lift the ladder from the ground and (ensuring nobody is in your way) wobble around a bit to show how challenging it is to hold up on your own. As you teach, ask the other adult to join you in stabilizing the ladder. Then ask two students to help as well. Lean the ladder against something sturdy and ask them to hold it in place as you climb up and down.*
- When we try to carry a burden alone it can be hard — sometimes almost impossible. But when other people help, the burden becomes lighter and easier to manage.
  - Sometimes the burdens our family members are carrying are stress, hurt, fear, or grief. Sometimes the burdens they're carrying are the mistakes they've made. But in all of those situations, they don't need us to abandon them. They need us to help support them.
  - You can be the kind of person who helps support your family members when they need you. You can be a source of strength, stability, peace, and rest — a reflection of what Jesus does for you.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - ★ **When you notice a family member's faults, what would it look like to follow Paul's instructions to *gently* help them make it right?**
  - **Read Galatians 5:22-23. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better support your family?**

## 4 WAYS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER

- Maybe you still need a few practical tips on how to support each other. If you choose to live these out in your home, your family relationships could change in big ways. When a family member needs support . . .
  - **ENCOURAGE THEM.** You can't support someone if you can't even encourage them. Think about a time when you were at a low point in your life or you were struggling with something, and someone encouraged you or reminded you who you really are. Did it change anything? Did it help you feel supported? Encouragement can go a long way, but we definitely don't do it as often as we could.
  - **BELIEVE THE BEST.** This step may be one of the hardest. Some of you have walked through awful circumstances or been really hurt by a family member. When that happens, it's easy to assume our family members will never change or that they're intentionally hurting us. But if you want your family to believe the best about you, try going first by believing the best about them. The more you do, the more likely you'll be to look past their outbursts and mistakes and be able to see both their good intentions and the ways they need your support.
  - **BE TRUSTWORTHY.** It isn't easy to trust your family when they've broken your trust, let you down, or disappointed you. You can't make your family worthy of your trust, but you can make sure you're worthy of theirs. Modeling trustworthiness can change the dynamics of your family in big ways.
  - **TRUST GOD.** Your family members will continue making mistakes. So will you. But when you make it a habit to trust God with the burdens you and your family are carrying, you'll quickly see there is nothing too big or too difficult for Jesus to carry. No matter how big the burden, Jesus has got it.
- These steps can make a big difference in your relationships and in your family, but I'll be honest – they can't fix everything. Not every family conflict is simple or easily resolved.
  - If your family conflicts feel so big you're not sure they'll ever be fixed, bring that burden to Jesus. Do what you can do support your family, but remember, it's not your responsibility to fix everyone else's problems. It's not possible!
  - Or if your doesn't have any major problems right now, that's great! Your loved ones may not be carrying huge burdens right now, but you still have the opportunity to love and support them in small but very important ways.

- Your family may not look like the families of the people sitting next to you, or of your friends, or of the families you see in movies. But that's okay. No matter what your family looks like, God still wants to work in your family.
- And remember, you're not alone. Your "family" can include a lot of people — including people you've chosen to love like family, like the people in this room. We're here to support you as you look for ways to support your family. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - This week, how can you better support one person in your family?

## WEEK 2 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we pray for each other.

### THE BIBLE

Colossians 1:1–14; I Thessalonians 5:16–18;  
Philippians 4:6

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Mood Swing

- Hey, welcome back to our series, *Familia*, where we're talking about our families – the families we were born into as well as the families we choose.
- Every family has difficulties from time to time, and nothing says “bad day” more than an unpredictable mood. If you're like most people, you know what it's like to swing into a bad mood. But hopefully you also know what it's like to swing into a great mood – like when you suddenly hear your favorite jam on the radio.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In the days leading up to your teaching time, poll your students to find out which songs are getting them hyped up right now. Make a playlist of around five of those songs. Play the first 10 to 15 seconds of one of those songs, give students enough time to react, then move to the next one.*

#### QUESTION | “What’s a song that can always shift your mood?”

- Music can shift our moods in some pretty powerful ways. **What’s a song that can always shift your mood? How?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- It's funny just how much these little things can change our entire mood.
  - Sometimes it's for the better, like when we hear a great song, a friend compliments us, or we get a good grade.

- But sometimes our moods can shift for the worse when a family member says something that gets under our skin, or does that thing that always annoys us, or turns on the vacuum cleaner when we're trying to take a nap.
- The things that have the power to shift our moods are different for each of us. Especially when it comes to our families, we all have different things that frustrate, annoy, and upset us.

### ACTIVITY | The Language of Family

- In this series, we're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but let's see if we can learn it in a few other languages too.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Open Google Translate on a device of your choice. If possible, mirror that device to your screen so students can see and hear it. Spend a few moments taking requests from your students about which language they want to see "family" translated into. For each translation you choose, play the audio of the pronunciation and practice saying it together. If students request a language you're unfamiliar with, take a moment to look up the countries in which it's spoken.*
- Because "family" is a concept understood in every language, all over the world, it's a reminder that . . .
  - No matter who we are, where we live, what language we speak, or what circumstances we were born into, we all need "family."
  - But every family is different. Just like the world is filled with different words for "family," it's filled with different kinds of families too.
  - Whether "family" for you means the people you live with, the people you're related to, or the people you've chosen to love like family, every family comes with its own joys, challenges, pressures, and quirks.
- If you've ever tried to communicate with someone who speaks a language unfamiliar to you, you know using the right word is critical. Using the right words is important in our families too.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

### STORY | Talk about a time a family member said something that changed your entire mood.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time a family member said something that changed your entire mood — for better or worse. You might talk about a time a sibling insulted you, or an adult unintentionally said something that hurt or angered you, or a relative's funny comment lightened a tense family moment.*
- If we're honest, so many things can change our mood. A simple word or comment often has the power to change everything, for better or worse.

### POLL | "When you're in a bad mood, do you . . . ?"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students respond to the following questions by raising their hands or cheering for the responses that apply to them.*
- **When you're with family and you're in a bad mood, do you usually . . .**

- **Go hide in your room?**
- **Bottle it up until you eventually explode?**
- **Find someone to blame?**
- **Cry?**
- **Whine and complain until you get your way?**
- **Argue your way out of it?**
- We all have different ways of dealing with our bad moods. Sometimes we might feel angry and want to scream at someone. Sometimes we might want someone to hurt like we feel hurt. Sometimes we don't know why we react the way we do.
- For some of you, your bad moods might often be a mystery to you. You're not sure why they happen, why you can't control them, or how to snap yourself out of them.
  - If that's you, can I tell you something that might help? At your age, that's really normal. Seriously. It's just how your brain and body are developing right now. So don't be too hard on yourself.
  - But at the same time, we all have to take responsibility for the way we treat each other. You're going to make mistakes (especially when your emotions feel a little out of your control), but what matters is that you learn from it.
- No matter what your attitude is usually like around family, we all affect the atmosphere of our homes with what we say. Our words and our attitudes can dramatically impact what happens in our families.

## SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:1–8

- Today we'll be reading more from Paul, who wrote a lot of the books in the New Testament.
  - We call them "books" today, but in reality they started out as letters written from Paul to some of the earliest followers of Jesus.
  - These letters were filled with wisdom, guidance, and often correction so that Jesus' followers could learn how to follow God more closely.
  - In many of these letters, you see Paul (and other writers) refer to their fellow Jesus-followers as God's "family." While the teaching in these letters is mostly meant to show Christians how to treat each other, there is so much we can (and should!) apply to the way we treat our actual families too.
- Today I want to show you part of a letter Paul wrote to the church in Colossae. The Christians here had once been strong in their faith, but they began to drift away from God, both in their beliefs and their behavior. So Paul intervened to do two things:
  - Remind them about the truth of who Jesus is.
  - Remind them to live like Jesus would want them to live.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Colossians 1:1–8.*
- Watch how Paul used his words when speaking to God's family.
  - He told them (and God) he was thankful for them.
  - He called them "holy" and "faithful," and encouraged them. They weren't perfect, but Paul saw the good in them.
  - He said he was always praying for them.

- Now think about Paul's attitude toward God's family.
  - Even though they had messed up and needed to be corrected, Paul didn't come at them with harsh or angry words. Paul's response was careful, patient, and gracious.
  - I wonder if that's because Paul understood from personal experience just how easy it is to mess up. Before he met Jesus, Paul's whole life had been about destroying Jesus' followers and their movement.
  - When we remember how imperfect we are, it's easier to respond graciously when other people act imperfectly.

### SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:9–14

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Colossians 1:9–14*.
- Paul said he had not stopped praying for the church family in Colossae! And Paul didn't put any qualifiers on that statement. He didn't say . . .
  - "We prayed for you when you weren't annoying."
  - "We only prayed for you when you did what we asked you to do."
  - "We prayed for you when we felt like it."
- Paul simply prayed for God's family, no matter what. I wonder what would happen if we decided to do the same for our families.

### SCRIPTURE | I Thessalonians 5:16–18

- The church at Colossae weren't the only people Paul was praying for, or who received his instructions to pray.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *I Thessalonians 5:16–18*.
- Now obviously, we can't be praying 24/7, right? Paul isn't telling us we're never allowed to sleep again so we can pray nonstop. But he is saying we need to make prayer, and praying for each other, a regular and consistent habit.
  - Even when we don't feel like it.
  - Even when we're busy.
  - Even when we're mad.
- Have you ever tried praying for someone when you were mad them? Have you ever tried praying when you were in a bad mood? When we pray, especially when we don't feel like praying, God changes . . .
  - **OUR WORDS.** It's a lot harder to say something horrible to a family member when you've just thanked God them or asked for help being patient with them.
  - **OUR ATTITUDES.** When we use our words to pray and be thankful for our families, it changes us from the inside out. God probably won't miraculously make our siblings less obnoxious or our relatives less hurtful. But when we pray, God gives us the patience and grace we need in the moment.
- It's not easy to control our words or our attitudes when it comes to family. But like Paul shows us, prayer has the power to change both us and our situations. That's why, **in God's family, we pray for each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**RESPONSE | The Daily Prayer Challenge**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, print and assemble the prayer card booklets provided in your downloads. The handout provided is designed to be printed on perforated note cards [like these](#), or printed on card stock and cut into eight equal rectangles. Print one copy for each student and perforate or cut the cards. Assemble the booklets by putting the cover card on top and the daily cards in order behind the cover. Start with whichever day of the week you do your weekly program – the challenge should begin that night. When the cards are in order, hole punch them in the top left corner and string them on a [binder ring](#). Place one booklet under each seat, along with a pen.*
- So what does this look like practically? One way is to simply dedicate this next week to praying for our families every day. It doesn't need to last for hours – it might only be a few moments. The point is that we get into the habit of praying for them. But how?
  - For one week, commit to writing your prayers down for your family.
  - Try writing a quick prayer on the front of that day's card in the morning.
  - Then in the evening, write on the back of the card how praying for your family impacted your words, your attitude, or your family dynamics that day.
- But what should we pray for? There are a lot of ways you could do this, but it's really up to you. You have seven days of the week, starting today. In those seven days, you might . . .
  - **PRAY FOR DIFFERENT FAMILY MEMBERS EACH DAY.** Flip through your booklet right now and write at least one name on each card as a reminder of who you'll pray for each day. You could even ask each person how you can pray for them – and then let them know you did.
  - **PRAY FOR DIFFERENT THINGS EACH DAY.** Maybe you already have things you know you need to pray for, but it's okay if you need a little help. If you look at Paul's letters, you'll see he prayed for a few different things for God's family. Each day this week, try taking the things Paul prayed for and praying one them over your family. Every day, thank God for them. Then you might pray that . . .
    - They would all come to know and love Jesus.
    - God would do great things through them.
    - They would know God's will.
    - God's Spirit would help them look more like Jesus.
    - They'd know God better.
    - They'd find strength in Jesus.
    - They'd be full of joy.
  - **PRAY FOR THE SAME THING EACH DAY.** Or maybe you have one specific thing you want to commit to praying about for your family this week. Maybe it's your attitude, or your family's circumstances, or a big conflict you want to see resolved. If that's true for you, go ahead and pray for it every day!

- Whatever you pray for, the point is to create a personal account for you to look back on of what you prayed for and how God changed things. Because if you make it a habit to pray for your family, things really will change. Every problem may not get solved, but God will change something – including you.

## PRAYER

- Let's close things out today by actually doing what we said we should do. Let's pray for our families.
  - There are some of you in this room who get a long pretty well with your families. Sure, we all get a little angry or mean once in a while, but for the most part, things are pretty okay.
  - For others of you, your whole family is struggling right now. Maybe you're mourning a big loss or enduring a really difficult time together.
  - And for some of you, "family" is a word you really struggle with because of how your family has hurt you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Close in a few moments of prayer, allowing students to pray or write silently while music plays.*
- We can all agree no one can make us quite as angry as our own family members. It's so easy to react with frustration, impatience, and cruelty. But this week, I want to challenge you to make prayer your reaction instead.
- It may not come easily at first, but with practice and time, I think you'll see God beginning to change your family in big ways – starting with you. Because **in God's family we pray for each other.**

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God’s family we pray for each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Colossians 1:1–14; I Thessalonians 5:16–18;  
Philippians 4:6

- **If you were wearing a mood ring, what color would it be today and why?**
- **What is the mood usually like in your family? What sort of things can shift the mood (for better or worse)?**
- **What do you usually do when you’re in a bad mood? How do you think that affects your family?**
- **What are some ways prayer could help change our attitude when we’re in a bad mood?**
- **How often do you pray in a typical day? Why don’t you think we reach out to God more often?**
- **What are your biggest questions or hesitations about prayer?**
- **What did you notice about the way Paul prayed for other Jesus-followers? Why did that stand out to you?**
- **When we pray for our families, who do you think changes most: us, them, or both? Why do you think so?**
- **Read Philippians 4:6. What’s something that happened at home recently that you should have prayed about? What do you think could have been different if you had talked to God about it?**
- **This week, how are you going to make it more of a habit to pray for your family?**

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God’s family we pray for each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Colossians 1:1–14; I Thessalonians 5:16–18;  
Philippians 4:6

- **If you were wearing a mood ring, what color would it be today and why?**
- **What is the mood usually like in your family? What sort of things can shift the mood (for better or worse)?**
- **What do you usually do when you’re in a bad mood? How do you think that affects your family?**
- **What are some ways prayer could help change our attitude when we’re in a bad mood?**
- **Read Philippians 4:6. What’s something that happened at home recently that you should have prayed about? What do you think could have been different if you had talked to God about it?**
- **This week, how are you going to make it more of a habit to pray for your family?**

## WEEK 2 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we pray for each other.

### THE BIBLE

Colossians 1:1–14; I Thessalonians 5:16–18;  
Philippians 4:6

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Mood Swing

- Hey, welcome back to our series, *Familia*, where we're talking about our families – the families we were born into as well as the families we choose.
- Every family has difficulties from time to time, and nothing says “bad day” more than an unpredictable mood. If you're like most people, you know what it's like to swing into a bad mood. But hopefully you also know what it's like to swing into a great mood – like when you suddenly hear your favorite jam on the radio.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In the days leading up to your teaching time, poll your students to find out which songs are getting them hyped up right now. Make a playlist of around five of those songs. Play the first 10 to 15 seconds of one of those songs, give students enough time to react, then move to the next one.*

#### QUESTION | “What’s a song that can always shift your mood?”

- Music can shift our moods in some pretty powerful ways. **What’s a song that can always shift your mood? How?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- It's funny just how much these little things can change our entire mood.
  - Sometimes it's for the better, like when we hear a great song, a friend compliments us, or we get a good grade.

- But sometimes our moods can shift for the worse when a family member says something that gets under our skin, or does that thing that always annoys us, or turns on the vacuum cleaner when we're trying to take a nap.
- The things that have the power to shift our moods are different for each of us. Especially when it comes to our families, we all have different things that frustrate, annoy, and upset us.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **If you were wearing a mood ring, what color would it be today and why?**
  - **What is the mood usually like in your family? What sort of things can shift the mood (for better or worse)?**

## ACTIVITY | The Language of Family

- In this series, we're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but let's see if we can learn it in a few other languages too.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Open Google Translate on a device of your choice. If possible, mirror that device to your screen so students can see and hear it. Spend a few moments taking requests from your students about which language they want to see "family" translated into. For each translation you choose, play the audio of the pronunciation and practice saying it together. If students request a language you're unfamiliar with, take a moment to look up the countries in which it's spoken.*
- Because "family" is a concept understood in every language, all over the world, it's a reminder that . . .
  - No matter who we are, where we live, what language we speak, or what circumstances we were born into, we all need "family."
  - But every family is different. Just like the world is filled with different words for "family," it's filled with different kinds of families too.
  - Whether "family" for you means the people you live with, the people you're related to, or the people you've chosen to love like family, every family comes with its own joys, challenges, pressures, and quirks.
- If you've ever tried to communicate with someone who speaks a language unfamiliar to you, you know using the right word is critical. Using the right words is important in our families too.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## STORY | Talk about a time a family member said something that changed your entire mood.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time a family member said something that changed your entire mood — for better or worse. You might talk about a time a sibling insulted you, or an adult unintentionally said something that hurt or angered you, or a relative's funny comment lightened a tense family moment.*

- If we're honest, so many things can change our mood. A simple word or comment often has the power to change everything, for better or worse.

### POLL | "When you're in a bad mood, do you . . . ?"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students respond to the following questions by raising their hands or cheering for the responses that apply to them.*
- **When you're with family and you're in a bad mood, do you usually . . .**
  - **Go hide in your room?**
  - **Bottle it up until you eventually explode?**
  - **Find someone to blame?**
  - **Cry?**
  - **Whine and complain until you get your way?**
  - **Argue your way out of it?**
- We all have different ways of dealing with our bad moods. Sometimes we might feel angry and want to scream at someone. Sometimes we might want someone to hurt like we feel hurt. Sometimes we don't know why we react the way we do.
- For some of you, your bad moods might often be a mystery to you. You're not sure why they happen, why you can't control them, or how to snap yourself out of them.
  - If that's you, can I tell you something that might help? At your age, that's really normal. Seriously. It's just how your brain and body are developing right now. So don't be too hard on yourself.
  - But at the same time, we all have to take responsibility for the way we treat each other. You're going to make mistakes (especially when your emotions feel a little out of your control), but what matters is that you learn from it.
- No matter what your attitude is usually like around family, we all affect the atmosphere of our homes with what we say. Our words and our attitudes can dramatically impact what happens in our families.

### SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:1–8

- Today we'll be reading more from Paul, who wrote a lot of the books in the New Testament.
  - We call them "books" today, but in reality they started out as letters written from Paul to some of the earliest followers of Jesus.
  - These letters were filled with wisdom, guidance, and often correction so that Jesus' followers could learn how to follow God more closely.
  - In many of these letters, you see Paul (and other writers) refer to their fellow Jesus-followers as God's "family." While the teaching in these letters is mostly meant to show Christians how to treat each other, there is so much we can (and should!) apply to the way we treat our actual families too.
- Today I want to show you part of a letter Paul wrote to the church in Colossae. The Christians here had once been strong in their faith, but they began to drift away from God, both in their beliefs and their behavior. So Paul intervened to do two things:

- Remind them about the truth of who Jesus is.
- Remind them to live like Jesus would want them to live.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Colossians 1:1–8.*
- Watch how Paul used his words when speaking to God’s family.
  - He told them (and God) he was thankful for them.
  - He called them “holy” and “faithful,” and encouraged them. They weren’t perfect, but Paul saw the good in them.
  - He said he was always praying for them.
- Now think about Paul’s attitude toward God’s family.
  - Even though they had messed up and needed to be corrected, Paul didn’t come at them with harsh or angry words. Paul’s response was careful, patient, and gracious.
  - I wonder if that’s because Paul understood from personal experience just how easy it is to mess up. Before he met Jesus, Paul’s whole life had been about destroying Jesus’ followers and their movement.
  - When we remember how imperfect we are, it’s easier to respond graciously when other people act imperfectly.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **When you’re in a bad mood, how do you think that affects your family?**
  - **What are some ways prayer could help change our attitude when we’re in a bad mood?**

## SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:9–14

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Colossians 1:9–14.*
- Paul said he had not stopped praying for the church family in Colossae! And Paul didn’t put any qualifiers on that statement. He didn’t say . . .
  - “We prayed for you when you weren’t annoying.”
  - “We only prayed for you when you did what we asked you to do.”
  - “We prayed for you when we felt like it.”
- Paul simply prayed for God’s family, no matter what. I wonder what would happen if we decided to do the same for our families.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **How often do you pray in a typical day? Why don’t you think we reach out to God more often?**
  - ☆ **What are your biggest questions or hesitations about prayer?**

## SCRIPTURE | I Thessalonians 5:16–18

- The church at Colossae weren't the only people Paul was praying for, or who received his instructions to pray.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I Thessalonians 5:16–18.*
- Now obviously, we can't be praying 24/7, right? Paul isn't telling us we're never allowed to sleep again so we can pray nonstop. But he is saying we need to make prayer, and praying for each other, a regular and consistent habit.
  - Even when we don't feel like it.
  - Even when we're busy.
  - Even when we're mad.
- Have you ever tried praying for someone when you were mad them? Have you ever tried praying when you were in a bad mood? When we pray, especially when we don't feel like praying, God changes . . .
  - **OUR WORDS.** It's a lot harder to say something horrible to a family member when you've just thanked God them or asked for help being patient with them.
  - **OUR ATTITUDES.** When we use our words to pray and be thankful for our families, it changes us from the inside out. God probably won't miraculously make our siblings less obnoxious or our relatives less hurtful. But when we pray, God gives us the patience and grace we need in the moment.
- It's not easy to control our words or our attitudes when it comes to family. But like Paul shows us, prayer has the power to change both us and our situations. That's why, **in God's family, we pray for each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ✳ **What did you notice about the way Paul prayed for other Jesus-followers? Why did that stand out to you?**
  - ✳ **When we pray for our families, who do you think changes most: us, them, or both? Why do you think so?**

## RESPONSE | The Daily Prayer Challenge

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, print and assemble the prayer card booklets provided in your downloads. The handout provided is designed to be printed on perforated note cards [like these](#), or printed on card stock and cut into eight equal rectangles. Print one copy for each student and perforate or cut the cards. Assemble the booklets by putting the cover card on top and the daily cards in order behind the cover. Start with whichever day of the week you do your weekly program – the challenge should begin that night. When the cards are in order, hole punch them*

in the top left corner and string them on a [binder ring](#). Place one booklet under each seat, along with a pen.

- So what does this look like practically? One way is to simply dedicate this next week to praying for our families every day. It doesn't need to last for hours — it might only be a few moments. The point is that we get into the habit of praying for them. But how?
  - For one week, commit to writing your prayers down for your family.
  - Try writing a quick prayer on the front of that day's card in the morning.
  - Then in the evening, write on the back of the card how praying for your family impacted your words, your attitude, or your family dynamics that day.
- But what should we pray for? There are a lot of ways you could do this, but it's really up to you. You have seven days of the week, starting today. In those seven days, you might . . .
  - **PRAY FOR DIFFERENT FAMILY MEMBERS EACH DAY.** Flip through your booklet right now and write at least one name on each card as a reminder of who you'll pray for each day. You could even ask each person how you can pray for them — and then let them know you did.
  - **PRAY FOR DIFFERENT THINGS EACH DAY.** Maybe you already have things you know you need to pray for, but it's okay if you need a little help. If you look at Paul's letters, you'll see he prayed for a few different things for God's family. Each day this week, try taking the things Paul prayed for and praying one them over your family. Every day, thank God for them. Then you might pray that . . .
    - They would all come to know and love Jesus.
    - God would do great things through them.
    - They would know God's will.
    - God's Spirit would help them look more like Jesus.
    - They'd know God better.
    - They'd find strength in Jesus.
    - They'd be full of joy.
  - **PRAY FOR THE SAME THING EACH DAY.** Or maybe you have one specific thing you want to commit to praying about for your family this week. Maybe it's your attitude, or your family's circumstances, or a big conflict you want to see resolved. If that's true for you, go ahead and pray for it every day!
- Whatever you pray for, the point is to create a personal account for you to look back on of what you prayed for and how God changed things. Because if you make it a habit to pray for your family, things really will change. Every problem may not get solved, but God will change something — including you.

## PRAYER

- Let's close things out today by actually doing what we said we should do. Let's pray for our families.
  - There are some of you in this room who get a long pretty well with your families. Sure, we all get a little angry or mean once in a while, but for the most part, things are pretty okay.

- For others of you, your whole family is struggling right now. Maybe you're mourning a big loss or enduring a really difficult time together.
- And for some of you, "family" is a word you really struggle with because of how your family has hurt you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Close in a few moments of prayer, allowing students to pray or write silently while music plays.*
- We can all agree no one can make us quite as angry as our own family members. It's so easy to react with frustration, impatience, and cruelty. But this week, I want to challenge you to make prayer your reaction instead.
- It may not come easily at first, but with practice and time, I think you'll see God beginning to change your family in big ways — starting with you. Because **in God's family we pray for each other.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Philippians 4:6. What's something that happened at home recently that you should have prayed about? What do you think could have been different if you had talked to God about it?**
  - **This week, how are you going to make it more of a habit to pray for your family?**

*Pray continually.*

I THESSALONIANS 5:17

**SUNDAY**

**MONDAY**

**TUESDAY**

**WEDNESDAY**

**THURSDAY**

**FRIDAY**

**SATURDAY**

## WEEK 3 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we reconcile with each other.

### THE BIBLE

Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21-22;  
Hebrews 12:14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### POLL | This or That

- Welcome back to our series, *Familia*, where we're talking about the people we fight with more than anyone else — our families. Sometimes we fight with family over really important things, but I'd be lying if I said I never got into a fight over a completely *unimportant* difference of opinion.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students stand up in the center of the room. Explain that you will read a series of "this or that" scenarios and they will walk to the left or right sides of the room to show which one they'd choose. If they wouldn't choose either, they can stay standing in the middle of the room. After each scenario, ask a few students why they chose that option. Give scenarios like . . .*
  - *Home-cooked meal or take-out?*
  - *Family road trip or family cruise?*
  - *Movie at home or movie in the theater?*
  - *Never do a chore again or get paid every time a sibling does a chore?*
  - *You always pick what's on TV or you always pick what's for dinner?*

#### QUESTION | "What's the most unimportant thing your family has ever fought about?"

- **So what's the most unimportant thing your family has ever fought about?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- When we're fighting with our family, it can be so hard to find common ground sometimes, right? No matter how big or small the issue is, fights continue when we . . .

- Think we're right.
- Think everyone else is wrong.
- Don't feel like we're being listened to or understood.
- Don't want to hear others' points of views.
- When we're fighting with our families, understanding each other can sometimes be so difficult that it feels like we're speaking totally different languages.

### ACTIVITY | The Language of Family

- In this series, we're talking about *familia* – that's Spanish for "family," but we've been learning it in a few other languages too.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Open Google Translate on a device of your choice. If possible, mirror that device to your screen so students can see and hear it. Spend a few moments taking requests from your students about which language they want to see "family" translated into. For each translation you choose, play the audio of the pronunciation and practice saying it together. If students request a language you're unfamiliar with, take a moment to look up the countries in which it's spoken.*
- There are more than 7,000 languages spoken today. That means there are more than 7,000 ways to say "family," but there are also more than 7,000 ways to misunderstand, miscommunicate, and fail to understand each other.
- When we're fighting with our families, it can sometimes seem impossible to understand or be understood by each other. Today, let's see if we can find a path forward, even when that doesn't seem possible.

### SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

### STORY | Talk about a time you refused to admit you were wrong.

- Sometimes, when we argue with others, we're fighting for what's right! But more often than not, we're actually just fighting for our own pride and ego.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a fight you had with a family member where you knew you were wrong, but refused to admit it. Share how your refusal to apologize, concede, or compromise impacted your relationship with the person you were fighting with.*
- Every family fights. Even if you have a friend whose family seems so perfect that you can't imagine them ever raising their voices at each other, I promise, they fight too. But the way we handle our fights with our family members is often not-so-great.
  - Maybe your fights get physical.
  - Or passive aggressive.
  - Or mean.
  - Or maybe your idea of "apologizing" is to just keep your distance until they get tired of being mad at you.
- You're always going to have fights and disagreements with your family – that's not going to change, but what can change is how you handle yourself in those moments.

- Will you be the kind of person who fights only for yourself? When you let selfishness, anger, unforgiveness, and bitterness build up in you, it's like road kill on the side of a hot desert road — eventually, it's going to get really rotten.
- Or will you be the kind of person who fights for your family? Will you do what it takes to address the ugly, painful, difficult things before they begin to rot?

## SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 4:31-5:2

- Every family has its own set of unique unhealthy patterns. It's not easy to fight well with our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home.
- The New Testament of the Bible (that's the part that was written after Jesus came to earth) is full of letters from early church leaders to the family of God.
  - People like Paul wrote them to help Jesus-followers learn how to live and love like Jesus would.
  - These letters communicated a lot of important things, like what God is like and what Jesus came to do. But a lot of these letters are simply filled with advice on how to get along with each other.
  - One of these letters is the book of Ephesians — a letter Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2.*
- Paul gave us a list of things to get rid of. How many of these things have you done or felt toward your family?
  - Bitterness.
  - Rage and anger.
  - Fighting.
  - Talking badly about each other.
  - Being cruel.
- And he said to choose a few different things instead. I wonder what it would look like if you chose to give your family more . . .
  - Kindness.
  - Compassion.
  - Forgiveness.
  - Love.
- But there's a really important idea Paul communicates here. The reason he tells us to do these things is because God has already done them for us through Jesus. Just like God forgave us, Paul tells us to forgive others.

## BUT WHAT ABOUT . . . ?

- But maybe you're thinking, "You talk about forgiveness like it's easy, but you don't know my situation." Maybe for you, your family has hurt you in ways that are much more significant than taking your AirPods or annoying you constantly. For you, maybe . . .

- You once made a huge mistake and are really hurt that your family doesn't trust you like they used to.
- A parent walked out on your family, and you hate that they left you or never said they're sorry.
- A relative is struggling with addiction or their mental health, or is in prison, and you're so angry at them for not being perfect or there for you.
- Or maybe a loved one has hurt you, or continues to hurt you. Maybe you've been abused physically, emotionally, or sexually by someone who is supposed to love and care for you.
- If any of these situations sound familiar to you, here's what I need you to know about this passage.
  - **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU.** While there are things in this passage you can learn from and apply, Paul didn't write this letter about your situation. He was writing to a group of adults who were fighting about much more ordinary things — not young people who were hurt by the people who were supposed to keep them safe.
  - **IT'S NOT ABOUT ABUSE.** If you've been abused or deeply hurt, or you're currently in a situation where you are in danger, please talk to one of the adults in the room before you leave tonight. The Bible is not telling you to let the person who is hurting you continue to hurt you. That's not what love or forgiveness is.
  - **IT ISN'T MEANT TO SHAME YOU.** In situations of deep hurt or pain, forgiveness isn't easy or simple. The greater the wound, the longer it takes to heal. If you're struggling to forgive someone because of something really difficult you experienced, God isn't angry or disappointed in you, but is full of kindness, compassion, and love for you.
- But if your typical family fight is about something more manageable than these things, I hope you hear what Paul says. Whatever is causing fighting, drama, and hurt feelings in your family right now, you can choose:
  - Kindness instead of cruelty.
  - Compassion instead of rage.
  - Forgiveness instead of bitterness.
  - Love instead of indifference.

### SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:21–22

- But remember how Paul said we should forgive each other because God has forgiven us? Paul talks about this more in a letter to another family of believers — the Colossians. To this group of Jesus-followers, Paul doesn't just talk about forgiveness. He talks about reconciliation.
  - Reconciliation means to make things right with someone. It's about repairing a damaged relationship.
  - Reconciliation is related to forgiveness, but it's not the same. Forgiveness is something you can do even if the person who hurt you isn't sorry, but reconciliation requires both of you to do your part.
  - Reconciliation doesn't always mean a relationship goes back to the way it was, but it does mean amends have been made, even if the relationship look different afterward.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Colossians 1:21–22*.
- It might sound challenging, or even impossible, to forgive and make things right with our families when they've hurt us, but Jesus isn't asking us to do something he hasn't already done for us.
  - Because of our sin, you and I have done so much to cause God hurt and pain, but God doesn't react to our hurtfulness with rage, cruelty, or retaliation.
  - Instead, Jesus came to be near us, invite us into his family, restore our relationship with God, and reconcile with us — even though he didn't need to. We were the only ones causing harm and deserving blame.
- In our families, there's usually much less of a contrast. Most of the time, everyone involved in a fight is a little bit responsible. We're all guilty of acting in ways that were hurtful and cruel, which is why Paul's advice is so important.
- We can forgive because we were forgiven. We can reconcile with our families because Jesus reconciled with us so we could join his family. That's why, **in God's family, we reconcile with each other.**

### NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

#### 3 WAYS TO RECONCILE

- So now what? How do we get rid of our tendencies to be bitter and angry, to pick fights, to talk badly about people, or to be cruel? How do we learn to choose kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and love instead? How, exactly, can we reconcile when we've been fighting?
  - **START WITH FORGIVENESS.** Forgiveness is the foundation of reconciliation. We can't reconcile until we're willing to let go of our bitterness and choose forgiveness instead. But remember:
    - It's okay if forgiveness takes time. God knows you're only human.
    - You can forgive even when the person isn't sorry. Forgiveness isn't a gift you give them — it's a gift you give yourself, because holding onto bitterness won't hurt anyone but you.
  - **AIM FOR UNITY.** "Unity" doesn't mean you have to agree with someone about everything. Unity is possible even if you disagree because "unity" does not mean "uniformity." Just because your family member has a different perspective than you doesn't mean you can't find common ground. At the very least, here are some things you can try to agree on:
    - The person you're fighting with is loved and made in God's image.
    - Neither of you are perfect. You've both messed up in the past.
    - But you're family — and you want to act like it.
  - **BEGIN A CONVERSATION.** When you're fighting with a family member, quit overthinking it. Just start somewhere. It doesn't have to be a five-hour conversation — it might even be a text message. If it helps, write down your ideas and thoughts before going into the conversation. And if you're afraid to have a conversation because you're not sure what to say or how it will go . . .

- Ask God to help guide the conversation and remind you you're not alone.
- Remember you can have more talks in the future! You don't have to solve it all in one conversation.
- Don't be discouraged if reconciliation doesn't happen immediately. Remember, the bigger the wound, the longer it takes to heal. Hang in there.
- Through Jesus, we can learn from the ultimate act of reconciliation. Jesus . . .
  - Forgave us before we even asked him to.
  - Reached out to us before we could even admit we'd done him wrong.
  - Reconciled us to God through his life, death, and resurrection.
  - Invited us into his family.
- Imagine how different our relationships at home would look if we decided to do our best to make things right with our family, no matter . . .
  - How broken the relationship feels.
  - How disappointed we are in our family's past choices.
  - How long we've been fighting.
  - If we've forgotten what we were even fighting about in the first place.

## RESPONSE | Family Bingo

- We've talked about some heavy topics today, but reconciliation isn't always painful. Sometimes it can even be kind of fun. Having fun together can both help heal a strained relationship and prevent that strain from ever happening.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Encourage students to fill out their bingo cards with ways they could connect (or reconnect) with a family member. Then encourage them to try a few of them during the week! Make this challenge incentivized by offering a prize to anyone who returns their card with a complete "bingo." Suggest challenges like . . .*
  - *Cook dinner together.*
  - *Go for a walk.*
  - *Write thank you note.*
  - *Listen to your favorite songs together.*
  - *Challenge them to a dance-off.*
- It's not easy to fight well with our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well – we just have to be willing to apply that at home. Whether it's through a dance-party, a note of apology, or a long heart-to-heart, it's so important to make things right when they've gone wrong. Because **in God's family, we reconcile with each other.**

# WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God’s family we reconcile with each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21-22;  
Hebrews 12:14

- **What’s something your family always fights about?**
- **What are some not-so-great ways you sometimes handle yourself during a fight with family? Why isn’t that approach working?**
- **On a scale of 1-5, how big do you think your family’s problems are? When your family’s problems are really big, where could you find extra help or support? When would you know it’s time to ask for help?**
- **How do you think we can tell the difference between a typical family conflict and something more unhealthy or dangerous?**
- **What do you think it means to “reconcile” with someone? How did Jesus do that for us?**
- **If a person were in an abusive situation, how might it be dangerous for them to try to reconcile with the person hurting them? What do you think God would want that person to know?**
- **When is it easy for you to reconcile with a family member? When is it difficult?**
- **Read Hebrews 12:14. What are some specific things you can do to live more peacefully with your family?**
- **How do we know when we’ve done all we can to be peaceful in a conflict? What should we do when we can’t do anything else?**
- **This week, who’s someone in your family you need to reconcile with? How will you do that?**

# WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

In God’s family we reconcile with each other.

#### THE BIBLE

Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21-22;  
Hebrews 12:14

- **What’s something your family always fights about?**
- **What are some not-so-great ways you sometimes handle yourself during a fight with family? Why isn’t that approach working?**
- **On a scale of 1-5, how big do you think your family’s problems are? When your family’s problems are really big, where could you find extra help or support? When would you know it’s time to ask for help?**
- **What do you think it means to “reconcile” with someone? How did Jesus do that for us?**
- **Read Hebrews 12:14. What are some specific things you can do to live more peacefully with your family?**
- **This week, who’s someone in your family you need to reconcile with? How will you do that?**

## WEEK 3 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we reconcile with each other.

### THE BIBLE

Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 1:21-22;  
Hebrews 12:14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### POLL | This or That

- Welcome back to our series, *Familia*, where we're talking about the people we fight with more than anyone else — our families. Sometimes we fight with family over really important things, but I'd be lying if I said I never got into a fight over a completely *unimportant* difference of opinion.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students stand up in the center of the room. Explain that you will read a series of "this or that" scenarios and they will walk to the left or right sides of the room to show which one they'd choose. If they wouldn't choose either, they can stay standing in the middle of the room. After each scenario, ask a few students why they chose that option. Give scenarios like*  
...
  - *Home-cooked meal or take-out?*
  - *Family road trip or family cruise?*
  - *Movie at home or movie in the theater?*
  - *Never do a chore again or get paid every time a sibling does a chore?*
  - *You always pick what's on TV or you always pick what's for dinner?*

#### QUESTION | "What's the most unimportant thing your family has ever fought about?"

- **So what's the most unimportant thing your family has ever fought about?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- When we're fighting with our family, it can be so hard to find common ground sometimes, right? No matter how big or small the issue is, fights continue when we . . .

- Think we're right.
- Think everyone else is wrong.
- Don't feel like we're being listened to or understood.
- Don't want to hear others' points of views.
- When we're fighting with our families, understanding each other can sometimes be so difficult that it feels like we're speaking totally different languages.

### ACTIVITY | The Language of Family

- In this series, we're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but we've been learning it in a few other languages too.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Open Google Translate on a device of your choice. If possible, mirror that device to your screen so students can see and hear it. Spend a few moments taking requests from your students about which language they want to see "family" translated into. For each translation you choose, play the audio of the pronunciation and practice saying it together. If students request a language you're unfamiliar with, take a moment to look up the countries in which it's spoken.*
- There are more than 7,000 languages spoken today. That means there are more than 7,000 ways to say "family," but there are also more than 7,000 ways to misunderstand, miscommunicate, and fail to understand each other.
- When we're fighting with our families, it can sometimes seem impossible to understand or be understood by each other. Today, let's see if we can find a path forward, even when that doesn't seem possible.

### SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

### STORY | Talk about a time you refused to admit you were wrong.

- Sometimes, when we argue with others, we're fighting for what's right! But more often than not, we're actually just fighting for our own pride and ego.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a fight you had with a family member where you knew you were wrong, but refused to admit it. Share how your refusal to apologize, concede, or compromise impacted your relationship with the person you were fighting with.*
- Every family fights. Even if you have a friend whose family seems so perfect that you can't imagine them ever raising their voices at each other, I promise, they fight too. But the way we handle our fights with our family members is often not-so-great.
  - Maybe your fights get physical.
  - Or passive aggressive.
  - Or mean.
  - Or maybe your idea of "apologizing" is to just keep your distance until they get tired of being mad at you.
- You're always going to have fights and disagreements with your family — that's not going to change, but what can change is how you handle yourself in those moments.

- Will you be the kind of person who fights only for yourself? When you let selfishness, anger, unforgiveness, and bitterness build up in you, it's like road kill on the side of a hot desert road — eventually, it's going to get really rotten.
- Or will you be the kind of person who fights for your family? Will you do what it takes to address the ugly, painful, difficult things before they begin to rot?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What's something your family always fights about?**
  - **What are some not-so-great ways you sometimes handle yourself during a fight with family? Why isn't that approach working?**

## SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 4:31-5:2

- Every family has its own set of unique unhealthy patterns. It's not easy to fight well with our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home.
- The New Testament of the Bible (that's the part that was written after Jesus came to earth) is full of letters from early church leaders to the family of God.
  - People like Paul wrote them to help Jesus-followers learn how to live and love like Jesus would.
  - These letters communicated a lot of important things, like what God is like and what Jesus came to do. But a lot of these letters are simply filled with advice on how to get along with each other.
  - One of these letters is the book of Ephesians — a letter Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2.
- Paul gave us a list of things to get rid of. How many of these things have you done or felt toward your family?
  - Bitterness.
  - Rage and anger.
  - Fighting.
  - Talking badly about each other.
  - Being cruel.
- And he said to choose a few different things instead. I wonder what it would look like if you chose to give your family more . . .
  - Kindness.
  - Compassion.
  - Forgiveness.
  - Love.

- But there's a really important idea Paul communicates here. The reason he tells us to do these things is because God has already done them for us through Jesus. Just like God forgave us, Paul tells us to forgive others.

### BUT WHAT ABOUT . . . ?

- But maybe you're thinking, "You talk about forgiveness like it's easy, but you don't know my situation." Maybe for you, your family has hurt you in ways that are much more significant than taking your AirPods or annoying you constantly. For you, maybe . . .
  - You once made a huge mistake and are really hurt that your family doesn't trust you like they used to.
  - A parent walked out on your family, and you hate that they left you or never said they're sorry.
  - A relative is struggling with addiction or their mental health, or is in prison, and you're so angry at them for not being perfect or there for you.
  - Or maybe a loved one has hurt you, or continues to hurt you. Maybe you've been abused physically, emotionally, or sexually by someone who is supposed to love and care for you.
- If any of these situations sound familiar to you, here's what I need you to know about this passage.
  - **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU.** While there are things in this passage you can learn from and apply, Paul didn't write this letter about your situation. He was writing to a group of adults who were fighting about much more ordinary things — not young people who were hurt by the people who were supposed to keep them safe.
  - **IT'S NOT ABOUT ABUSE.** If you've been abused or deeply hurt, or you're currently in a situation where you are in danger, please talk to one of the adults in the room before you leave tonight. The Bible is not telling you to let the person who is hurting you continue to hurt you. That's not what love or forgiveness is.
  - **IT ISN'T MEANT TO SHAME YOU.** In situations of deep hurt or pain, forgiveness isn't easy or simple. The greater the wound, the longer it takes to heal. If you're struggling to forgive someone because of something really difficult you experienced, God isn't angry or disappointed in you, but is full of kindness, compassion, and love for you.
- But if your typical family fight is about something more manageable than these things, I hope you hear what Paul says. Whatever is causing fighting, drama, and hurt feelings in your family right now, you can choose:
  - Kindness instead of cruelty.
  - Compassion instead of rage.
  - Forgiveness instead of bitterness.
  - Love instead of indifference.

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*

- On a scale of 1-5, how big do you think your family's problems are? When your family's problems are really big, where could you find extra help or support? When would you know it's time to ask for help?
- ✪ How do you think we can tell the difference between a typical family conflict and something more unhealthy or dangerous?

## SCRIPTURE | Colossians 1:21–22

- But remember how Paul said we should forgive each other because God has forgiven us? Paul talks about this more in a letter to another family of believers – the Colossians. To this group of Jesus-followers, Paul doesn't just talk about forgiveness. He talks about reconciliation.
  - Reconciliation means to make things right with someone. It's about repairing a damaged relationship.
  - Reconciliation is related to forgiveness, but it's not the same. Forgiveness is something you can do even if the person who hurt you isn't sorry, but reconciliation requires both of you to do your part.
  - Reconciliation doesn't always mean a relationship goes back to the way it was, but it does mean amends have been made, even if the relationship look different afterward.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Colossians 1:21–22.
- It might sound challenging, or even impossible, to forgive and make things right with our families when they've hurt us, but Jesus isn't asking us to do something he hasn't already done for us.
  - Because of our sin, you and I have done so much to cause God hurt and pain, but God doesn't react to our hurtfulness with rage, cruelty, or retaliation.
  - Instead, Jesus came to be near us, invite us into his family, restore our relationship with God, and reconcile with us – even though he didn't need to. We were the only ones causing harm and deserving blame.
- In our families, there's usually much less of a contrast. Most of the time, everyone involved in a fight is a little bit responsible. We're all guilty of acting in ways that were hurtful and cruel, which is why Paul's advice is so important.
- We can forgive because we were forgiven. We can reconcile with our families because Jesus reconciled with us so we could join his family. That's why, **in God's family, we reconcile with each other.**

## NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - What do you think it means to "reconcile" with someone? How did Jesus do that for us?
  - ✪ If a person were in an abusive situation, how might it be dangerous for them to try to reconcile with the person hurting them? What do you think God would want that person to know?

✪ When is it easy for you to reconcile with a family member? When is it difficult?

### 3 WAYS TO RECONCILE

- So now what? How do we get rid of our tendencies to be bitter and angry, to pick fights, to talk badly about people, or to be cruel? How do we learn to choose kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and love instead? How, exactly, can we reconcile when we've been fighting?
  - **START WITH FORGIVENESS.** Forgiveness is the foundation of reconciliation. We can't reconcile until we're willing to let go of our bitterness and choose forgiveness instead. But remember:
    - It's okay if forgiveness takes time. God knows you're only human.
    - You can forgive even when the person isn't sorry. Forgiveness isn't a gift you give them — it's a gift you give yourself, because holding onto bitterness won't hurt anyone but you.
  - **AIM FOR UNITY.** "Unity" doesn't mean you have to agree with someone about everything. Unity is possible even if you disagree because "unity" does not mean "uniformity." Just because your family member has a different perspective than you doesn't mean you can't find common ground. At the very least, here are some things you can try to agree on:
    - The person you're fighting with is loved and made in God's image.
    - Neither of you are perfect. You've both messed up in the past.
    - But you're family — and you want to act like it.
  - **BEGIN A CONVERSATION.** When you're fighting with a family member, quit overthinking it. Just start somewhere. It doesn't have to be a five-hour conversation — it might even be a text message. If it helps, write down your ideas and thoughts before going into the conversation. And if you're afraid to have a conversation because you're not sure what to say or how it will go . . .
    - Ask God to help guide the conversation and remind you you're not alone.
    - Remember you can have more talks in the future! You don't have to solve it all in one conversation.
    - Don't be discouraged if reconciliation doesn't happen immediately. Remember, the bigger the wound, the longer it takes to heal. Hang in there.
- Through Jesus, we can learn from the ultimate act of reconciliation. Jesus . . .
  - Forgave us before we even asked him to.
  - Reached out to us before we could even admit we'd done him wrong.
  - Reconciled us to God through his life, death, and resurrection.
  - Invited us into his family.
- Imagine how different our relationships at home would look if we decided to do our best to make things right with our family, no matter . . .
  - How broken the relationship feels.
  - How disappointed we are in our family's past choices.
  - How long we've been fighting.
  - If we've forgotten what we were even fighting about in the first place.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **Read Hebrews 12:14. What are some specific things you can do to live more peacefully with your family?**
  - ★ **How do we know when we've done all we can to be peaceful in a conflict? What should we do when we can't do anything else?**

## RESPONSE | Family Bingo

- We've talked about some heavy topics today, but reconciliation isn't always painful. Sometimes it can even be kind of fun. Having fun together can both help heal a strained relationship and prevent that strain from ever happening.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Encourage students to fill out their bingo cards with ways they could connect (or reconnect) with a family member. Then encourage them to try a few of them during the week! Make this challenge incentivized by offering a prize to anyone who returns their card with a complete "bingo." Suggest challenges like . . .
  - Cook dinner together.
  - Go for a walk.
  - Write thank you note.
  - Listen to your favorite songs together.
  - Challenge them to a dance-off.
- It's not easy to fight well with our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well – we just have to be willing to apply that at home. Whether it's through a dance-party, a note of apology, or a long heart-to-heart, it's so important to make things right when they've gone wrong. Because **in God's family, we reconcile with each other.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **This week, who's someone in your family you need to reconcile with? How will you do that?**

# B I N G O



# B I N G O



## WEEK 4 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we love each other.

### THE BIBLE

I John 3:16-18, 4:7-12; John 15:9-17;  
I Corinthians 13:4-7

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Rapped In Love

- Welcome to the final week of *Familia*, where we're talking about the people we (supposedly) love more than anyone else — our families.
- But “love” is an interesting word, right? We might say we “love” our families, but we also say we “love” tacos, or Simone Biles, or naps. So let's see what else you “love.”
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need note cards, a large bowl, and a black marker. On each [note card](#), write a variety of randomly selected words (cheddar, money, bread, mommy, nobody, gossip, circus, tsunami, tacos), and place the cards into the bowl. To play, either split students into groups or bring a few students to the front of the room to compete in a freestyle rap contest. Have each player or team to draw at least six words from the bowl and then rap for 30 seconds about love — using all of the words they drew from the bowl.*

#### ACTIVITY | Love It or Hate It

- That was a good start, but I think we still need to break down the word “love” a little bit more.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, collect a variety of objects or photos for students to give their opinions about, and prepare five different pieces of paper, each with a phrase written on it (“Love It,” “Kind of Love It,” “It's Okay,” “Don't Love It,” and “Hate It”). Prepare a selection of five different items or photos per student you'd like to participate. For each round, have a student come to the front and give them all five pieces of paper. Reveal an item or photo, one at a time, for them to label with their opinion. They can only label each item once and once the label is placed,*

it cannot be moved. See if they can make it through the reveal of all five items and still stand by their opinions at the end. Try including items like . . .

- Pizza.
- Money.
- A phone.
- A picture frame of a family.
- Baby animals.
- Textbooks.
- Vegetables.
- Ice cream.

### VIDEO | A Clip from Your Favorite Cheesy Love Story

- Now we're getting a little closer to narrowing down what "love" means. But even among the people we "love" most, there are different kinds of love, right? I mean, it would be pretty weird if we told everyone we loved them like this . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a movie or show you personally "love," where one character is expressing their love for another in a way that's a little cheesy, melodramatic, or over the top. Play or more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Maybe you've said or done something like this during an epic prom-posal, but real love isn't usually like a romantic comedy. Whether we're talking about a crush, a friend, a parent, or a relative, you might have some questions about what it means to really "love" someone.
  - Is love a feeling? Or is it something you do? Is it both?
  - Can you love someone without always *feeling* like you love them?
  - If all you do is *feel* like you love someone, does that make it true?
- Maybe these seem like questions that don't really matter, but I promise they do! When it comes to our families we need to talk about what it means to "love" them.

**SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?

### VIDEO | A Clip from a Sign Language Tutorial

- For the last few weeks, we've been learning to say "family" in different languages as a reminder that there are thousands of ways to say (and be) "family."
- As a reminder that love is so much more than just the words you say, let's learn the word "family" in what might be a new way for some of you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (2:06-2:10) of someone demonstrating how to say "family" in American Sign Language. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- When it comes to our families, "love" isn't just a word we say or hear. It's something that must translate into action.

## STORY | Talk about a time you struggled to show a family member love through your actions.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a personal story from your own life (or have a volunteer or student tell a story) about a time when you struggled to show a family member you loved them with your actions. Maybe you learned you could communicate love to a parent by making dinner, or cleaning up, or getting home on time. Or maybe you learned a sibling needed you to love them by spending time with them, talking to them at school, or not teasing them in front of your friends. Share what you learned and how choosing to show them love in that way (or failing to show them love in that way) impacted your relationship.*
- Even if we speak the same language as our family members, it doesn't mean we all communicate in the same way. For one person, "love" might best be expressed through words. But for others, "love" might mean being thoughtful, helping out around the house, or hanging out together.

## SCRIPTURE | I John 4:7–12

- When Jesus was on earth, he spent a lot of time with his followers, but one of the disciples he spent the most time with was John.
  - John saw Jesus teach, heal people, perform miracles, and do ministry. He was even there when Jesus died and later after he rose from the dead.
  - After Jesus left earth, John was part of the first wave of Jesus-followers who created the first church communities where people could worship and learn about Jesus together.
  - As the church grew, John began writing letters to God's family of believers about how they could turn their love for Jesus into action.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I John 4:7-12.*
- According to John, we can't fully understand what it means to love apart from God. The origin and definition of love comes from God.
  - God invented love and gave us the ability to feel love. But God went a step further by demonstrating love for us through Jesus.
  - We were so loved that God came to earth as Jesus, suffered and died, forgave us before we ever asked to be forgiven, and made it possible for our relationship with God to be restored.
  - Just like Jesus loved us with his actions, John tells us to love each other with our actions.
  - And here's the really cool part. Even though you and I can't see God with our eyes, we can show each other what God is like by the way we love each other.
- John tells us not to just say we love each other. He tells us to prove we love each other with our actions.

## SCRIPTURE | John 15:9–17

- How do we do that? I told you a moment ago that John spent a lot of time with Jesus as one of his closest disciples. That means John was there as an eyewitness for many of Jesus' biggest moments.

- The Gospel of John is the retelling of much of Jesus' life through John's eyes. In it, we can read the story of what Jesus said and did in the days and hours leading up to his death.
  - In John, we see Jesus knew his death was near, but instead of spending his time thinking about his own comfort or safety, Jesus spent his time comforting his disciples.
  - Before he was arrested and taken away to be killed, Jesus gave his closest friends some parting words, including these . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read John 15:9–17.
- Do you see how love is part of everything Jesus says here?
  - Because of God's love, Jesus loves us.
  - Because of Jesus' love for us, we can love others.
  - When we love each other, we demonstrate our love for God.

### SCRIPTURE | I John 3:16-18

- Let's take a look at one more thing John said, from the same letter we read from a moment ago.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read I John 3:16-18.
- Jesus gave everything for us, so we should be willing to give anything for each other. It's not enough to say we love each other with our words. We have to love each other with what we do.
  - Jesus never intended his followers to be identified as Christians by what we put in our TikTok bios or social media captions.
  - Instead, Jesus wants his family to be identified by the way we love one another.
- God's family is a big, diverse, global, multicultural family, but the shared DNA of God's family is love. We can love each other because we are loved by God. **In God's family we love each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

### VIDEO | A Clip from "6-Year-Old Saves Younger Sister From Dog Attack" (Inside Edition)

- You might have heard this story. Back in 2020, a little boy in Wyoming saved his kid sister from an attacking dog. Six-year-old Bridger Walker was mauled when he stepped between a dog and his younger sister.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:17-0:40) of a little boy who rescued his younger sister from a dog attack. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Bridger needed about 90 stitches, but he said, "If someone was going to die, I thought it should be me." He was willing to give up everything to make sure his sister was going to be okay.
- This is the kind of love Jesus demonstrated for us. If someone was going to die, Jesus decided it should be him – not us. It's the kind of love Jesus tells us to demonstrate for others, including our families.

### 3 WAYS TO LOVE LIKE JESUS

- Now does this mean we should be reckless and not value our own lives at all? Um, no. We're not supposed to start running around like a vigilante Batman, but what if we tried to love others (especially our families) with these three steps . . . ?
- **LOVE WITH YOUR WORDS.** I'm sure we can all think of moments when our words toward our family members have been less-than-loving. It might even happen later today, but the next time you're tempted to be unloving with your words . . .
  - Stop. Before you react, pause, think about what you want to say, and then pause a little longer. If it's not something that needs to be said, don't say it. But if it is, say it lovingly.
  - Your words carry a lot of weight. The things you say to your family have the potential to do a lot of harm. But if your words are chosen with love they have the potential to do a lot of good too.
  - If loving your family with your words is hard, start small.
    - "I love you."
    - "Thank you."
    - "You're funny."
    - "Something I like about you is . . ."
    - "I thought it was nice when you . . ."
    - "I appreciate it when you . . ."
  - Whatever you decide to say, remember to always be real with your words. Love is honest and authentic, not manipulative.
- **LOVE WITH YOUR ACTIONS.** Remember your words won't have any weight if your actions don't back them up. To love your family well, you'll need to find out what "love" means to them. But you can always start by asking, "How can I put them first?"
  - Would they feel loved if you helped around the house more?
  - What if you spent more time with them?
  - What if you invited them to do something fun?
  - What if you complained a little less or started conversations a little more often?
- **LOVE THROUGH FORGIVENESS.** Forgiveness can be hard — especially when it's family. Sometimes it feels good to be angry and be petty. Sometimes we like the attention we get or the drama we can start when we've been wronged.
  - But here are two questions: how often do you make mistakes or do something you regret? (Probably pretty often.) And when you do, how often is God willing to forgive you? (The correct answer is "every single time.")
  - I know forgiveness isn't always easy, but sometimes we refuse to forgive even when forgiveness would be easy. Maybe that's because we're being selfish, or stubborn, or difficult. Whatever the reason, if you're holding onto unforgiveness when you could easily let it go . . . let it go. Cancel that debt. Imagine you stamped it with a giant "paid" stamp.
  - If God can forgive us eternally, we can forgive each other — even if we sometimes have to forgive each other repeatedly. That's what love would do.

## RESPONSE | Family Conversation Starters

- I know it can be a challenge sometimes to demonstrate love clearly to your family. So to help, I want you to choose just one family member you're going to love on purpose this week.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 4 folder. Challenge students to identify at least one member of their family they want to love more intentionally, then use the handout to guide them through a conversation with them – and some action steps too.*
- Maybe loving your family doesn't seem like a particular world-changing act. But by choosing to love others (even in small ways) we are reflecting the love God has for us – and that love can change everything.
  - Just like God didn't just say "I feel love for you," but said "I love you" by coming to earth and proving it, we're called to love each other with our words, our actions, and our forgiveness.
  - I don't know about you, but that's the kind of love I want to be known for. It isn't just a feeling, but a choice. Because **in God's family, we love each other.**

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

In God’s family we  
love each other.

#### **THE BIBLE**

I John 3:16-18, 4:7–12; John 15:9–17;  
I Corinthians 13:4-7

- **What’s something you really love right now?**
- **What are some ways people make you feel loved with their words? What about with their actions?**
- **When you love someone, what are some of the things you usually do to let them know? Do you think that usually gets the message across?**
- **How does God use words to let us know we’re loved? How do God’s actions let us know we’re loved?**
- **What do you think — if you feel love for someone, is it always true that you love them? Why or why not?**
- **Why do you think the Bible puts such a big emphasis on our actions toward other people and not just our beliefs about God?**
- **What are some specific ways we can “lay down our lives” for the people in our families?**
- **Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better love your family?**
- **When we’re struggling to love our families, what do you think God would want us to do? What do you think God wants to do for us?**
- **This week, who is someone you’re going to love like God loves you? How will you do that?**

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers



“Family” is a concept understood all over the world, in every country, culture, and language, but no two families are the same. We all have our unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, problems, and dysfunctions. It’s not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. In this 4-week series, we’ll take a look at some of the lessons learned by Jesus-followers in the early days of the church, because learning how to be part of God’s family might help us learn how to be part of our own families. In God’s family, **we support each other, pray for each other, reconcile with each other, and love each other.**

### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

In God's family we  
love each other.

#### **THE BIBLE**

I John 3:16-18, 4:7-12; John 15:9-17;  
I Corinthians 13:4-7

- **What’s something you really love right now?**
- **What are some ways people make you feel loved with their words? What about with their actions?**
- **When you love someone, what are some of the things you usually do to let them know? Do you think that usually gets the message across?**
- **How does God use words to let us know we’re loved? How do God’s actions let us know we’re loved?**
- **Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better love your family?**
- **This week, who is someone you’re going to love like God loves you? How will you do that?**

## WEEK 4 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

In God's family we  
love each other.

### THE BIBLE

I John 3:16-18, 4:7-12; John 15:9-17;  
I Corinthians 13:4-7

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Rapped In Love

- Welcome to the final week of *Familia*, where we're talking about the people we (supposedly) love more than anyone else — our families.
- But "love" is an interesting word, right? We might say we "love" our families, but we also say we "love" tacos, or Simone Biles, or naps. So let's see what else you "love."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need note cards, a large bowl, and a black marker. On each [note card](#), write a variety of randomly selected words (cheddar, money, bread, mommy, nobody, gossip, circus, tsunami, tacos), and place the cards into the bowl. To play, either split students into groups or bring a few students to the front of the room to compete in a freestyle rap contest. Have each player or team to draw at least six words from the bowl and then rap for 30 seconds about love — using all of the words they drew from the bowl.*

#### ACTIVITY | Love It or Hate It

- That was a good start, but I think we still need to break down the word "love" a little bit more.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, collect a variety of objects or photos for students to give their opinions about, and prepare five different pieces of paper, each with a phrase written on it ("Love It," "Kind of Love It," "It's Okay," "Don't Love It," and "Hate It"). Prepare a selection of five different items or photos per student you'd like to participate. For each round, have a student come to the front and give them all five pieces of paper. Reveal an item or photo, one at a time, for them to label with their opinion. They can only label each item once and once the label is placed,*

it cannot be moved. See if they can make it through the reveal of all five items and still stand by their opinions at the end. Try including items like . . .

- Pizza.
- Money.
- A phone.
- A picture frame of a family.
- Baby animals.
- Textbooks.
- Vegetables.
- Ice cream.

### VIDEO | A Clip from Your Favorite Cheesy Love Story

- Now we're getting a little closer to narrowing down what "love" means. But even among the people we "love" most, there are different kinds of love, right? I mean, it would be pretty weird if we told everyone we loved them like this . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a movie or show you personally "love," where one character is expressing their love for another in a way that's a little cheesy, melodramatic, or over the top. Play or more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Maybe you've said or done something like this during an epic prom-posal, but real love isn't usually like a romantic comedy. Whether we're talking about a crush, a friend, a parent, or a relative, you might have some questions about what it means to really "love" someone.
  - Is love a feeling? Or is it something you do? Is it both?
  - Can you love someone without always *feeling* like you love them?
  - If all you do is *feel* like you love someone, does that make it true?
- Maybe these seem like questions that don't really matter, but I promise they do! When it comes to our families we need to talk about what it means to "love" them.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What's something you really love right now?**
  - **What are some ways people make you feel loved with their words? What about with their actions?**

### VIDEO | A Clip from a Sign Language Tutorial

- For the last few weeks, we've been learning to say "family" in different languages as a reminder that there are thousands of ways to say (and be) "family."

- As a reminder that love is so much more than just the words you say, let's learn the word "family" in what might be a new way for some of you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (2:06-2:10) of someone demonstrating how to say "family" in American Sign Language. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- When it comes to our families, "love" isn't just a word we say or hear. It's something that must translate into action.

### STORY | Talk about a time you struggled to show a family member love through your actions.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a personal story from your own life (or have a volunteer or student tell a story) about a time when you struggled to show a family member you loved them with your actions. Maybe you learned you could communicate love to a parent by making dinner, or cleaning up, or getting home on time. Or maybe you learned a sibling needed you to love them by spending time with them, talking to them at school, or not teasing them in front of your friends. Share what you learned and how choosing to show them love in that way (or failing to show them love in that way) impacted your relationship.*
- Even if we speak the same language as our family members, it doesn't mean we all communicate in the same way. For one person, "love" might best be expressed through words. But for others, "love" might mean being thoughtful, helping out around the house, or hanging out together.

### SCRIPTURE | I John 4:7–12

- When Jesus was on earth, he spent a lot of time with his followers, but one of the disciples he spent the most time with was John.
  - John saw Jesus teach, heal people, perform miracles, and do ministry. He was even there when Jesus died and later after he rose from the dead.
  - After Jesus left earth, John was part of the first wave of Jesus-followers who created the first church communities where people could worship and learn about Jesus together.
  - As the church grew, John began writing letters to God's family of believers about how they could turn their love for Jesus into action.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I John 4:7-12.*
- According to John, we can't fully understand what it means to love apart from God. The origin and definition of love comes from God.
  - God invented love and gave us the ability to feel love. But God went a step further by demonstrating love for us through Jesus.
  - We were so loved that God came to earth as Jesus, suffered and died, forgave us before we ever asked to be forgiven, and made it possible for our relationship with God to be restored.
  - Just like Jesus loved us with his actions, John tells us to love each other with our actions.

- And here's the really cool part. Even though you and I can't see God with our eyes, we can show each other what God is like by the way we love each other.
- John tells us not to just say we love each other. He tells us to prove we love each other with our actions.

### SCRIPTURE | John 15:9–17

- How do we do that? I told you a moment ago that John spent a lot of time with Jesus as one of his closest disciples. That means John was there as an eyewitness for many of Jesus' biggest moments.
- The Gospel of John is the retelling of much of Jesus' life through John's eyes. In it, we can read the story of what Jesus said and did in the days and hours leading up to his death.
  - In John, we see Jesus knew his death was near, but instead of spending his time thinking about his own comfort or safety, Jesus spent his time comforting his disciples.
  - Before he was arrested and taken away to be killed, Jesus gave his closest friends some parting words, including these . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 15:9–17.*
- Do you see how love is part of everything Jesus says here?
  - Because of God's love, Jesus loves us.
  - Because of Jesus' love for us, we can love others.
  - When we love each other, we demonstrate our love for God.

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **When you love someone, what are some of the things you usually do to let them know? Do you think that usually gets the message across?**
  - **How does God use words to let us know we're loved? How do God's actions let us know we're loved?**

### SCRIPTURE | I John 3:16-18

- Let's take a look at one more thing John said, from the same letter we read from a moment ago.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I John 3:16-18.*
- Jesus gave everything for us, so we should be willing to give anything for each other. It's not enough to say we love each other with our words. We have to love each other with what we do.
  - Jesus never intended his followers to be identified as Christians by what we put in our TikTok bios or social media captions.
  - Instead, Jesus wants his family to be identified by the way we love one another.
- God's family is a big, diverse, global, multicultural family, but the shared DNA of God's family is love. We can love each other because we are loved by God. **In God's family we love each other.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**VIDEO | A Clip from “6-Year-Old Saves Younger Sister From Dog Attack” (Inside Edition)**

- You might have heard this story. Back in 2020, a little boy in Wyoming saved his kid sister from an attacking dog. Six-year-old Bridger Walker was mauled when he stepped between a dog and his younger sister.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:17-0:40) of a little boy who rescued his younger sister from a dog attack. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Bridger needed about 90 stitches, but he said, “If someone was going to die, I thought it should be me.” He was willing to give up everything to make sure his sister was going to be okay.
- This is the kind of love Jesus demonstrated for us. If someone was going to die, Jesus decided it should be him – not us. It’s the kind of love Jesus tells us to demonstrate for others, including our families.

**DISCUSSION**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **What do you think – if you *feel* love for someone, is it always true that you love them? Why or why not?**
  - ☆ **Why do you think the Bible puts such a big emphasis on our actions toward other people and not just our beliefs about God?**
  - ☆ **What are some specific ways we can “lay down our lives” for the people in our families?**

**3 WAYS TO LOVE LIKE JESUS**

- Now does this mean we should be reckless and not value our own lives at all? Um, no. We’re not supposed to start running around like a vigilante Batman, but what if we tried to love others (especially our families) with these three steps . . . ?
- **LOVE WITH YOUR WORDS.** I’m sure we can all think of moments when our words toward our family members have been less-than-loving. It might even happen later today, but the next time you’re tempted to be unloving with your words . . .
  - Stop. Before you react, pause, think about what you want to say, and then pause a little longer. If it’s not something that needs to be said, don’t say it. But if it is, say it lovingly.
  - Your words carry a lot of weight. The things you say to your family have the potential to do a lot of harm. But if your words are chosen with love they have the potential to do a lot of good too.

- If loving your family with your words is hard, start small.
  - “I love you.”
  - “Thank you.”
  - “You’re funny.”
  - “Something I like about you is . . . .”
  - “I thought it was nice when you . . . .”
  - “I appreciate it when you . . . .”
- Whatever you decide to say, remember to always be real with your words. Love is honest and authentic, not manipulative.
- **LOVE WITH YOUR ACTIONS.** Remember your words won’t have any weight if your actions don’t back them up. To love your family well, you’ll need to find out what “love” means to them. But you can always start by asking, “How can I put them first?”
  - Would they feel loved if you helped around the house more?
  - What if you spent more time with them?
  - What if you invited them to do something fun?
  - What if you complained a little less or started conversations a little more often?
- **LOVE THROUGH FORGIVENESS.** Forgiveness can be hard — especially when it’s family. Sometimes it feels good to be angry and be petty. Sometimes we like the attention we get or the drama we can start when we’ve been wronged.
  - But here are two questions: how often do you make mistakes or do something you regret? (Probably pretty often.) And when you do, how often is God willing to forgive you? (The correct answer is “every single time.”)
  - I know forgiveness isn’t always easy, but sometimes we refuse to forgive even when forgiveness would be easy. Maybe that’s because we’re being selfish, or stubborn, or difficult. Whatever the reason, if you’re holding onto unforgiveness when you could easily let it go . . . let it go. Cancel that debt. Imagine you stamped it with a giant “paid” stamp.
  - If God can forgive us eternally, we can forgive each other — even if we sometimes have to forgive each other repeatedly. That’s what love would do.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better love your family?**
  - ★ **When we’re struggling to love our families, what do you think God would want us to do? What do you think God wants to do for us?**
  - **This week, who is someone you’re going to love like God loves you? How will you do that?**

## RESPONSE | Family Conversation Starters

- I know it can be a challenge sometimes to demonstrate love clearly to your family. So to help, I want you to choose just one family member you're going to love on purpose this week.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 4 folder. Challenge students to identify at least one member of their family they want to love more intentionally, then use the handout to guide them through a conversation with them – and some action steps too.*
- Maybe loving your family doesn't seem like a particular world-changing act. But by choosing to love others (even in small ways) we are reflecting the love God has for us – and that love can change everything.
  - Just like God didn't just say "I feel love for you," but said "I love you" by coming to earth and proving it, we're called to love each other with our words, our actions, and our forgiveness.
  - I don't know about you, but that's the kind of love I want to be known for. It isn't just a feeling, but a choice. Because **in God's family, we love each other.**

One thing I love about you is \_\_\_\_\_  
I APPRECIATE IT WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

One way I love spending time  
with you is \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT'S SOMETHING I CAN  
DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL  
MORE LOVED?**

What's something I do that doesn't  
make you feel loved?

WHICH OF THESE THINGS COULD I WORK  
ON TO BE MORE LOVING AT HOME:

- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- CONTENTMENT
- HUMILITY
- RESPECT
- SELFLESSNESS
- CONTROLLING MY TEMPER
- FORGIVENESS
- HONESTY
- TRUST

One thing I love about you is \_\_\_\_\_  
I APPRECIATE IT WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

One way I love spending time  
with you is \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT'S SOMETHING I CAN  
DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL  
MORE LOVED?**

What's something I do that doesn't  
make you feel loved?

WHICH OF THESE THINGS COULD I WORK  
ON TO BE MORE LOVING AT HOME:

- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- CONTENTMENT
- HUMILITY
- RESPECT
- SELFLESSNESS
- CONTROLLING MY TEMPER
- FORGIVENESS
- HONESTY
- TRUST

One thing I love about you is \_\_\_\_\_  
I APPRECIATE IT WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

One way I love spending time  
with you is \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT'S SOMETHING I CAN  
DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL  
MORE LOVED?**

What's something I do that doesn't  
make you feel loved?

WHICH OF THESE THINGS COULD I WORK  
ON TO BE MORE LOVING AT HOME:

- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- CONTENTMENT
- HUMILITY
- RESPECT
- SELFLESSNESS
- CONTROLLING MY TEMPER
- FORGIVENESS
- HONESTY
- TRUST

One thing I love about you is \_\_\_\_\_  
I APPRECIATE IT WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

One way I love spending time  
with you is \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT'S SOMETHING I CAN  
DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL  
MORE LOVED?**

What's something I do that doesn't  
make you feel loved?

WHICH OF THESE THINGS COULD I WORK  
ON TO BE MORE LOVING AT HOME:

- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- CONTENTMENT
- HUMILITY
- RESPECT
- SELFLESSNESS
- CONTROLLING MY TEMPER
- FORGIVENESS
- HONESTY
- TRUST



## ONE-MINUTE SERMON SCRIPTS



### ONE-MINUTE SERMONS

After you teach each week, we recommend **filming a video of yourself re-teaching your message in one minute or less**. Then post it on social media! We've written the beginnings of a script for you each week, and we've also filmed complete [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) for you too, in partnership with [Rescue a Generation](#). Make your own or post ours — whatever you want!

## WEEK 1

Family. In Spanish, it's *familia*. There are more than 7,000 languages spoken today and more than 7,000 ways to say "family." All over the world, the concept of "family" is something we all have in common, but no two families are the same. We all have unique family structures, quirks, traditions, values, and yes, dysfunctions. At their best, our families can be a great support system. But at their worst, our families can cause us a lot of hurt. It's not always easy to love our families (or even like them sometimes), but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. Like in the book of Galatians, Paul tells us we can love each other by "carrying each other's burdens." Paul was talking about how to love each other in God's family of Jesus-followers, but it matters for our actual families too. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

## WEEK 2

Admit it — no one can make you quite as angry as your own family. Have you ever been so angry with a relative that you found yourself saying words (okay, maybe *yelling* words), without really thinking about them? It was like your mouth suddenly had a mind of its own. It happens to the best of us, but that doesn't mean these moments of harsh words are something we should just accept as part of our lives. Our words matter. It's not always easy to speak kindly to our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well with our actions and words — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. Like in the book of Colossians, when Paul gives us a clear and simple instruction for how followers of Jesus can use their words to build up instead of tear down. Paul reminds us that, **in God's family, we pray for each other.**

## WEEK 3

Every family fights. Every single one. Even if you have a friend whose family seems so perfect that you can't imagine them ever raising their voices at each other, I promise, they fight too. But the way we handle our fights with our family members is often, um, not so great. Maybe your fights get a little physical. Or passive aggressive. Or straight up mean. Maybe your idea of "apologizing" is to just keep your distance until they get tired of being mad at you. Every family has its own set of unique unhealthy patterns. It's not easy to fight well with our families, but the Bible is full of guidance on how to love each other well — we just have to be willing to apply that at home. Like in the book of Ephesians, when Paul challenges us to not just move on or try to forget, but to actually make things right. Because **in God's family, we reconcile with each other.**

## WEEK 4

Is love a feeling? Or is love something you do? Is it both? Can you love someone without *feeling* like you love them? If all you do is feel like you love someone, does that make it true? Okay, maybe these just seem like hypothetical questions that don't really matter, but I promise they do! When it comes to our families (or anyone who's occasionally hard to love) we need to talk about what we're talking about when we say we "love" them. See, love is at the core of who we are called to be as followers of Jesus. It's not just a feeling. It's a choice. Look at God for example. God didn't just say "I feel love for you." God said "I love you" by coming to earth as a person named Jesus and proving He loved us with His actions. That's what we're called to do for each other too — to love with our actions. **In God's family, we love each other.**

## MARKETING CHECKLIST



### BEFORE THE SERIES

#### ✓ TO DO

	Print your <b>Series Promo Poster</b> and <b>Series Promo Cards</b> and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your <b>Volunteer Hub</b> and <b>Family Hub</b> web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the <b>Family Email</b> for this series.
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the <b>suggested Social Media Posts and Captions</b> for this series.
	Post the <b>Bumper Video</b> on social media with this caption:  Let's talk about something we all have – families! And family drama too. <i>Familia</i> starts this week! See you there!

### AFTER WEEK 1

#### ✓ TO DO

	Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 1 on social media with this caption:  In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to support each other.
	Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption:  Remember, sometimes the burdens our family members are carrying are stress, hurt, fear, or mistakes they've made. They don't need us to abandon them. They need us to support them.
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to pray for each other.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, it's easy to react with frustration to our families. But this week, make prayer your reaction instead. With practice and time, you'll see God beginning to change your family in big ways — starting with you.</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to reconcile with each other.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, it's not easy to fight well with our families, but whether it's through a dance-party, a note of apology, or a long heart-to-heart, it's so important to make things right when they've gone wrong.</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 4

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to love each other.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, loving your family may not seem like a particular world-changing act. But by choosing to love others (even in small ways) we are reflecting the love God has for us — and that love can change everything.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

# Grow students

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS



Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

### BEFORE THE SERIES



#### **BUMPER VIDEO**

Let's talk about something we all have — families! And family drama too. *Familia* starts this week! See you there!

### AFTER WEEK 1



#### **1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 1)**

In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to support each other.

### AFTER WEEK 2



#### **1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 2)**

In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to pray for each other.



#### **BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)**

Remember, sometimes the burdens our family members are carrying are stress, hurt, fear, or mistakes they've made. They don't need us to abandon them. They need us to support them.



#### **BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)**

Remember, it's easy to react with frustration to our families. But this week, make prayer your reaction instead. With practice and time, you'll see God beginning to change your family in big ways — starting with you.

AFTER WEEK 3



**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 3)**

In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to reconcile with each other.

AFTER WEEK 4



**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 4)**

In case you missed it, we talked this week about how in God's family (and our actual families) we're called to love each other.



**BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)**

Remember, it's not easy to fight well with our families, but whether it's through a dance-party, a note of apology, or a long heart-to-heart, it's so important to make things right when they've gone wrong.



**BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)**

Remember, loving your family may not seem like a particular world-changing act. But by choosing to love others (even in small ways) we are reflecting the love God has for us — and that love can change everything.

what we're teaching

家庭  
Rodina  
Familje  
Family  
**Familia**  
परिवार  
fjölskylda  
porodica  
whanau



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

what we're teaching

家庭  
Rodina  
Familje  
Family  
**Familia**  
परिवार  
fjölskylda  
porodica  
whanau



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

what we're teaching

家庭  
Rodina  
Familje  
Family  
**Familia**  
परिवार  
fjölskylda  
porodica  
whanau



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

what we're teaching

家庭  
Rodina  
Familje  
Family  
**Familia**  
परिवार  
fjölskylda  
porodica  
whanau



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE