



MODERN

FAMILIES

A 4-WEEK SERIES ON FAMILY

BY KATHY KHANG



modernfamilies

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

It should only take a quick look around to realize there are no perfect families (not even in the Bible), but that doesn't stop us from comparing our families' quirks, flaws, and shortcomings to the seemingly perfect lives of other families. In this 4-week series, you'll challenge students to **give their families grace, seek resolution to their conflicts, trust God through difficult transitions, and treat more friends like family.**

THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

WEEK 1

Our families can all feel pretty dysfunctional at times, but it helps to know that no family (not even families in the Bible) were perfect. This week, you'll challenge students to see and treat their not-so-perfect families with grace.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** There are no perfect families.
- **THE BIBLE:** Matthew 1:1-16.
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Discussion, Image, Story, Activity, Question, Reflection, and time of Prayer.

WEEK 2

We all fight with our families. Although we may handle those fights differently, we're all guilty of shifting blame and avoiding conflict. This week, you'll help students see how a conflict between Adam, Eve, and God can help us navigate our own family conflicts.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** No family conflict is too big for God.
- **THE BIBLE:** Genesis 3:8-13.
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Poll, Story, and Reflection.

WEEK 3

At some point, our families will change. Some of those changes are normal and expected, but others are painful and take us by surprise. Times of transition are never easy, but this week you'll help students find God's peace in the midst of change.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** When your family changes, God remains your center.
- **THE BIBLE:** Psalm 23:1-6.
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Discussion, Video, Prop, and Response.

WEEK 4

No matter what kind of family you have, you need a community outside your immediate family. We can find community in a lot of places, but God has called His church to be a community that treats each other like family. This week, you'll challenge students to see their church community as a family.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Your family is bigger than you think.
- **THE BIBLE:** Acts 2:42-47.
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** An Activity, Story, Video, and Response.

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, or both, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique audience.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HACKS

HACK #1: Go easy on the details of the Old Testament stories. In Week 1 of this series, you'll be prompted to talk about the stories of some not-so-perfect families in the Old Testament. Those stories include the concepts of prostitution, virginity, affairs, and an ancient social structure that allowed a woman to have children by her own father-in-law. Many of these concepts may not be understood by, or acceptable for, a middle school audience. Use your best judgment (and get feedback from someone else in your ministry) as you seek to talk about these stories in ways your middle schoolers can understand.

HACK #2: Talk about divorce. While divorce can affect children of all ages, you will probably have more middle schoolers than high schoolers wrestling with the impact of their parents' divorce for two reasons. First, because most children are under the age of 16 when their parents divorce. Second, because middle schoolers are less emotionally and socially stable than high schoolers. Thanks to puberty and the instabilities that are inherent to the middle school years, middle schoolers will have more difficulty processing and adjusting to a divorce than a high schooler would. Keep that in mind as you and your small group leaders talk to middle schoolers about their families. There is a very good chance that many have parents who are in the middle of a divorce and that even more are still dealing with the consequences of a divorce that happened several years before.

HIGH SCHOOL HACKS

HACK #1: Explore the very imperfect families in Scripture. Although your middle schoolers may not be ready to hear all the details of those Old Testament stories in Week 1, your high schoolers are. When you talk about the complicated families listed in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, don't shy away from the not-so-pretty details. Allow your high schoolers to absorb and be shocked by the depth of the imperfections in those stories, to ask questions, and to share their reactions.

HACK #2: Talk about freedom. Because the natural drive of every high schooler is to gain independence from their parents, one of the most common arguments students will have with their parents will have to do with freedom and boundaries. When you discuss family conflict with your high schoolers, make this issue a priority. As an adult, you understand this struggle for freedom and independence is a natural and healthy part of growing up, but your high schoolers may not. If a high schooler doesn't realize this search for freedom is normal, they could experience some very negative consequences. If a high schooler doesn't understand that their struggle is a universal struggle, they might start to believe something is inherently wrong with them (leading to unhealthy feelings of guilt or shame) or with their parents (leading to unhealthy feelings of anger and displays of rebellion). If a high schooler isn't aware of the underlying reasons for their desire for freedom, they may be unable to navigate this conflict with their parents objectively. So talk about it! Normalize it. Let your high schoolers know their desire for freedom is healthy and good, then challenge them to balance their search for personal freedom with a commitment to a healthy relationship with their parents.

HOW TO PREP FOR THIS SERIES

WHAT TO GET

If you want to try every Building Block mentioned in this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

WEEK 1:

- One of your family photos.
- Plenty of white paper and pens.

WEEK 2:

- Supplies for running a live poll, if needed.

WEEK 3:

- The opening montage from the movie *Up*.
- A compass or compass app on your phone.
- Plenty of white paper and pens.

WEEK 4:

- [This video clip](#) from a local news station or a similar clip.
- The invitations (for print, social media, or both) provided in your Week 4 folder.
- Cards stock.
- Pens and markers.

WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so you'll probably want to customize a few things.

- **Teaching Guides:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group of teenagers.
- **Conversation Guides:** If you make changes to your Teaching Guides, make sure your Conversation Guides reflect those changes.
- **Graphics:** We've created a number of slides for you already, but we've also provided a blank slide in case you need to make your own.
- **Emails:** For every series, customize your weekly volunteer emails and your monthly parent email.

WHAT TO MAKE

In Week 4 of this series, we recommend challenging your students to invite a friend to church or small group using the invitations we've provided. We've provided a basic design for these invitations, but you may want to customize them with your ministry's information or logo before printing or giving them to your students.

WHAT TO PRINT

When you're done customizing, be sure to print . . .

- **Conversation Guides:** One for every small group leader, plus a few extras.
- **Response:** Print copies of the Invitations provided in your Week 4 folder. The files provided are meant for quarter-page note cards (4.25" x 5.5"), but if you'd like them to fit into a standard-sized envelope, you can cut, crop, or edit them as needed.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your volunteers and parents are prepared and in the loop . . .

- **Volunteer Emails:** We've written one volunteer email for every week of this series. After you've customized them, send them at least a few days in advance.
- **Parent Emails:** We've written one parent email for this series. After you've customized it, send it at least a few days before you begin this series.
- **Social Media:** We've also written some helpful social-media-sized posts for your parents and volunteers to go along with this series. You can find them in your **Parent** and **Volunteer Communication Guides** for this series. Use them wherever you communicate online.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KATHY KHANG



kathykhang.com



facebook.com/kathykhangauthor



twitter.com/mskathykhang



instagram.com/mskathykhang



Kathy is a writer, speaker, and coffee drinker. She writes on her personal blog, is a columnist for *Sojourners* magazine, and partners with other writers, pastors, and Christian leaders to highlight and move the conversation forward on issues of race, ethnicity, and gender within the church. Kathy also has worked for the past 19 years with a national parachurch organization.

Her journey began with childhood diaries and journals, moved into newsrooms, and then led her to a co-author a book entitled [*More Than Serving Tea*](#). The book is about the intersection of faith, culture, and gender, and tells just part of an important story of Asian American Christian women. The title of her book tells as much about the content as it does about Kathy. It connects the hope of “more” to that of a stereotypical image of both “Asian” as represented by the West – submissive servant – and “women” as represented by the West, the East, and by some interpretations of biblical womanhood.

Kathy's work discusses how she can still serve others, enjoy tea (although she prefers coffee), embrace her complex ethnic, cultural, and racial identity, and her womanhood, all while loving Jesus and living and leading in an imperfect world.

Kathy is the mother of three and wife of one. She loves Jesus. She really, really likes yoga and deep breaths, nail polish and lipstick, and girlfriends and their laughter and tears.

If you'd like to chat with Kathy about her work, raising teenagers, or the qualities of your favorite cup of coffee, reach out! She'd love to connect.



WEEK 1

TEACHING GUIDE

modernfamilies

THE BIG IDEA

There are no perfect families.

THE BIBLE

Matthew 1:1-16

WHAT?

DISCUSSION: "What would you change about your family?"

- For the next four weeks, we're going to talk about our families. We probably love them most of the time, but . . . well, sometimes we love them less.
- We all have a family, of course, and those relationships impact us — sometimes more or less than we would expect.
- Take a minute and think about your family. Turn to the person next to you and talk about this question: what would you change about your family and why?
- *Give them a few minutes to discuss. Then ask a few students to share their answers.*

IMAGE: Your Family Photo

Put a photo of your family on screen.

STORY: Talk about your family.

- *Take a few minutes to describe your own family. What did you like about your family as you were growing up? What would you have changed about your family if you had the chance? Maybe your family didn't share your faith. Maybe you wish you saw your parents more. Maybe you regret fighting with or ignoring your siblings so much.*
- Maybe you can relate. See, even youth pastors don't come from perfect families.

SO WHAT?

ACTIVITY: Draw Your Family Tree

- Before your program, be sure to place a blank sheet of paper under each seat, along with a pen.
- Just like I don't have a perfect family, I'm pretty sure you don't have a perfect family either. No one does.
- You all have a sheet of paper. On it, go ahead and draw your family tree. Give them a few moments to do this. You might want to play some music while you wait.
- To the left of the tree, list the things you love and appreciate about your family.
- To the right of the tree, list the things you don't love as much or wish you could change about your family. Give them a few moments to do this. You might want to play some music while you wait.
- I know this might seem a bit scary, but when we get to small group, we're going to share about our families and what we wrote about our family trees. I already went first!
- We all come from a variety of families — you can tell just by looking around at all these pieces of paper. Even though it sometimes feels like our families are the absolute worst, the reality is that we all have things we would want to change about our families if we could.
- There is no such thing as a perfect family.

JESUS DIDN'T HAVE A PERFECT FAMILY

- One of the things I love most about Jesus is how much He understands us. Because God came to earth and lived among us, He knows what it's like to face the struggles we face — even the struggle of a not-so-perfect family.
- If you've ever heard the Christmas story, you know Jesus' family tree was pretty interesting.

QUESTION: "What do you know about Jesus' family tree?"

- But I want to hear from some of you. What do you know about Jesus' family tree?
- Give a few students opportunities to respond. Look for details about Jesus' parents, His birth story, His childhood, or the fact that He never married.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:1-16

- Genealogies aren't the most exciting part of Scripture, but they can actually help paint a full picture of the stories of the people we read about in the Bible.
- Read Matthew 1:1-16 or have a volunteer read it for you.
- Do you know what I find interesting about that list of names? Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Mary are the only women named in what is usually a list of all men. It also includes a mention of Solomon's mother, who was the wife of Uriah. Since these women are listed in Scripture, their stories must be pretty good, right? Well, that depends on your definition of "good."
- Have you ever heard of Tamar? Her children were fathered by her father-in-law because his sons were wicked.
- Rahab was a prostitute who helped the Israelite spies capture the city of Jericho.
- Ruth's marriage to Boaz was her second marriage.
- Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave birth to Jesus before she was married to Joseph.
- Oh, and then there was David's extramarital affair with Uriah's wife.

- Jesus didn't come from a perfect family, nor did he have a perfect childhood. (By the way, if you're harboring any grudges toward your parents because they once lost you in a grocery store, give them a break. Jesus' parents lost Him once too.)
- Jesus' complicated family story isn't new. Many of us have complicated families, but Jesus' genealogy is evidence that you don't have to have a perfect family in order to be used by God, accepted by God, or loved by God.
- Jesus' family tree is a reminder of something we all need to be reassured of once in a while: **there are no perfect families.**

NOW WHAT?

REFLECTION

- Now that we know a little more about Jesus and His family, take another look at your family tree. *You may want to play a few minutes of soft music.*
- Take a look at the list of things you thought you might want to change. Do they still seem as terrible as they did a few minutes ago?
- Ask yourself why you wanted to change those things? Was it because you were comparing your family to someone else's family? Was it because your family doesn't always meet your expectations? Did you want to change those things for a good reason or a selfish one?
- What would it take for things at home to be better? What can you do to change things? What can't you do to change things?

DON'T EXPECT YOUR FAMILY TO BE PERFECT

- I know your family isn't perfect because my family isn't perfect. Neither was Jesus' family.
- I can't tell you the secret to transforming your family into a perfect family, but here's what I can tell you . . .
 - **It's okay that your family isn't perfect.** Remember, no one's is. Our families are all imperfect in their own unique ways.
 - **Your family's imperfections don't change God's love for you.** They don't make you any less loved, valued, or seen by Him.
 - **Your family's imperfections don't limit what God can do.** We read about some pretty imperfect families today, but God still did something incredible through them — He brought Jesus into the world.
- I can't tell you how to make your family perfect, but what do you think would happen if you forgave your family for their imperfections? What if you decided to accept and love them exactly as they are, imperfections and all? What if you gave your imperfect family the same grace God has given to imperfect you?

PRAYER

God, thank you for being honest with us about Jesus' family. Thank you for reminding us that being faithful doesn't require a perfect family because we already are loved by a perfect God. Thank you for our families, as imperfect as they are. Please take a look into our hearts and heal the places where our imperfect families have hurt us. Thank you for calling us your daughters and sons. Amen.

WEEK 1

CONVERSATION GUIDE

modernfamilies

THIS SERIES

It should only take a quick look around to realize there are no perfect families (not even in the Bible), but that doesn't stop us from comparing our families' quirks, flaws, and shortcomings to the seemingly perfect lives of other families. In this 4-week series, you'll challenge students to **give their families grace, seek resolution to their conflicts, trust God through difficult transitions, and treat more friends like family.**

THIS WEEK

THE BIG IDEA

There are no perfect families.

THE BIBLE

Matthew 1:1-16

- Do you know someone whose family seems perfect? Describe their family.
- How would you describe your family?
- What do you like about your family and why?
- What would you change about your family and why?
- What do you know about Jesus' family tree?

- READ Matthew 1:1-16. What names in this passage stand out to you? (do you recognize any?)
- Why is this passage important to us? (*Gives historical genealogy & connects Old testament & New Testament*)
- Why is it important to realize that Jesus' family wasn't perfect?

- What's one thing you can't change about your family?
- What's one thing you can change about your family?
- What do you think would happen if you stopped wanting or expecting your family to be perfect?
- This week, how can you show more grace for your imperfect family?

WHO IS YOUR ONE?



WEEK 2

TEACHING GUIDE

modernfamilies

THE BIG IDEA

No family conflict is too big for God.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 3:8-13

WHAT?

POLL: Ask about their family fights.

There are a number of ways to poll your students either live or before your teaching time. If you want to keep things simple, ask them to raise their hands or take a tally as they walk through the door. If you want to get a little fancier, try using a polling service like [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Kahoot](#).

- When's the last time you fought with your parents? This month? This week? Yesterday? Today?
- When's the last time you fought with your siblings? This month? This week? Yesterday? Today?
- When's the last time you apologized to someone in your family? This month? This week? Yesterday? Today?
- When's the last time someone in your family apologized to you? This month? This week? Yesterday? Today?
- How often do you tell your friends about an argument with your family before the argument is resolved? Never? Sometimes? Always?
- How often do you pray with your family members after an argument? Never? Sometimes? Always?

STORY: Talk about a time you fought with a family member.

Tell a story about a time you fought with a family member. You'll tell this story in two parts. In this first part, talk only about the conflict. Express outrage over what that family member did or said to you. The goal is for students to identify with you and your perspective on the situation. Later in your teaching time, you'll give more context and talk about how the situation was resolved. For now, focus on the conflict and how you felt.

SO WHAT?

EVERY FAMILY FIGHTS

- Conflict happens in the best of families, but blaming each other and trying to keep the conflict hidden can make a bigger mess.
- Maybe you're the type of person who prefers to give the silent treatment. That doesn't usually do much to help a situation, does it?
- Maybe you prefer to pretend a fight never happened. That's not very helpful either.
- Or maybe, during a conflict, you tend to blame everyone and everything but yourself, or vent to your friends, or even shove it all down inside where you don't have to think about it.
- We all have at least one of these tendencies when it comes to conflict, but none of them are very healthy.
- God doesn't want us to hide from conflict — especially when that conflict is with our families.
- God doesn't hide from those conflicts either. Actually, God wants to be a part of our family conflicts. I know. Crazy.
- My favorite example of this is when God inserted himself right into the middle of the first husband and wife argument recorded in Scripture. In this story, God gives us a blueprint for exactly what *not* to do.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3:8-13

- *Read or ask a volunteer to read Genesis 3:8-13.*
- At this point in the story, Adam and Eve are in the garden with no stress. What could go wrong?
- But then the serpent deceives Eve by telling her that eating the fruit God forbade won't kill her but will actually make her like God. Yikes.
- Eve eats the fruit and offers it to Adam. Adam doesn't refuse even though God specifically told him not to eat it.
- Now, this isn't exactly an argument, but it's close. We don't see Adam and Eve yelling at each other, but there is definitely a conflict happening. When Adam and Eve hear God walking in the garden (can you imagine what it was like to hear God walking in the garden?), they hide.
- If you've ever avoided an argument or conflict by hiding or avoiding it, you can relate.
- But God seeks out Adam and Eve. He isn't afraid of a little conflict.
- When God finds them, Adam tells God he hid because he was afraid because he was naked. Instead of fessing up to eating the forbidden fruit, he changes the subject! That's not all. What does Adam do next? He blames Eve!
- When God asks Eve about what happened, does she take responsibility and ask for forgiveness? No! She blames the serpent.
- Now that I think about it, this sounds less like a fight between a husband and wife and more like a fight between two siblings in the backseat of the car. "What happened?" "She started it!" "No, he started it!"
- Adam and Eve sinned against God, and they sinned against each other by blaming each other for their own mess-ups.
- But here's what's so interesting about God's response to all of this conflict. The whole time, God knows what actually happened. But God isn't yelling. God isn't listing the five other things Adam may have also done wrong. God is gracious. God seeks out Adam and Eve and invites them into His presence to talk with him and each other.

- Ultimately, this story of the sin of Adam and Eve sets the stage for the world we live in today.
- We may not be in the garden walking with God like Adam and Eve, but God hasn't abandoned us.
- We may not be eating forbidden apples, but we are still fighting, blaming, and failing to choose God's best for us.
- God may not be handing us new clothes to wear, but He is still responding to our failures with mercy, kindness, and forgiveness.

NOW WHAT?

STORY: Continue your story about a fight with a family member.

Return to the story you began telling earlier, but this time approach the story with humility and introspection rather than outrage. Point out where blame was misplaced and where you may have tried to hide the truth from others, from God, or even from yourself. Tell your students how you reached a resolution to your conflict and share anything you regret doing or not doing in the course of the conflict and resolution.

REFLECTION

- Last week, we said that no family is perfect. This week, I hope you realize that every family fights. But here's what's wonderful: **no family conflict is too big for God.**
- For just a few minutes, I want to challenge you to reflect on the ways you usually respond to your family conflicts and how God might be calling you to respond differently next time. *You may want to play a few minutes of soft music.*
- Think about the way you usually respond during a conflict. Do you blame? Avoid? Both?
- How does conflict with your family usually make you feel? Do you feel angry? Hurt? Ashamed? Afraid?
- What unhealthy habits do you have when it comes to conflict? Do you give the silent treatment? Lose your temper? Ignore your feelings? Text your friends? Post about it on social media?
- What's one thing you could do differently next time your family fights?
- How can you invite God into that conflict instead of trying to handle it yourself?

PREPARE NOW FOR YOUR NEXT FAMILY CONFLICT

- Yes, you're going to fight with your family again. Maybe even today.
- When that next fight happens, remember how God responded to Adam and Eve. He didn't yell. He didn't blame. He was patient, kind, and gracious.
- So when you find yourself in the middle of a family conflict, take a deep breath. Choose grace. And invite God into your conflict.
- **No family conflict is too big for God.**

WEEK 2

CONVERSATION GUIDE

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THIS SERIES

It should only take a quick look around to realize there are no perfect families (not even in the Bible), but that doesn't stop us from comparing our families' quirks, flaws, and shortcomings to the seemingly perfect lives of other families. In this 4-week series, you'll challenge students to **give their families grace, seek resolution to their conflicts, trust God through difficult transitions, and treat more friends like family.**

THIS WEEK

THE BIG IDEA

No family conflict is too big for God.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 3:8-13; 14-15

- **What do you usually fight about with your parents? your siblings?**
- **When you fight with your family, are you more likely to give the silent treatment or lose your temper? Give an example.**
- **Read Gen 3:8-13. What observations do you make in this passage?**
~~~ NOTE: v.6-7 THIS IS WHERE SIN STARTED ~~~
- **How did Adam and Eve disobey God? Why did they disobey?**
- **What is Lord God's posture in this passage?**
- **READ Gen 3:14-15.**
  - **v14 - Who is the serpent?**
  - **v15 - 'He will crush/strike your head' - Who is this referencing - "he"?**  
Jesus shows up in Gen 3:15, as the Hope and Savior for the Fall/ Sin
- **Give an example of a time you tried to shift the blame for something you did.**
- **Are you more likely to avoid conflict with your family or work it out? Give an example.**
- **How does conflict with your family usually make you feel and why?**
- **When's the last time you apologized in your family?**
- **What's one thing you could do differently next time your family fights?**
- **How often do you pray with your family members after an argument?**
- **This week, how can you invite God into your conflict with your family instead of trying to handle it yourself?**

*WHO IS YOUR ONE?*



# WEEK 3

## TEACHING GUIDE

modernfamilies

### THE BIG IDEA

When your family changes,  
God remains your center.

### THE BIBLE

Psalms 23:1-6

## WHAT?

### ACTIVITY: Family Charades

- Welcome back to Week 3 of our series called *Modern Families*, where we're talking about our not-so-perfect families.
- This week, I thought we'd get started with a little game as we talk about the difficulties we sometimes face with our families.
- *Split your students into groups, maybe by grade or gender, and select a few students from each group to be your actors. Give each group one or two scenarios to act out while the rest of the students guess what they're doing. Each scenario should be a significant transition that a family might experience, like a new baby, a graduating student moving away from home for the first time, a divorce, or a move to a new city.*

### DISCUSSION: Reflecting on the Activity

- Actors, have you ever experienced the scenario you were acting out? *Pause and let them respond.* What was it like acting out a scenario you, or someone you know, has experienced? *Pause and let them respond.*
- Turn to the people next to you and have a conversation about the scenarios you just saw. Have you ever experienced any of those scenarios? What was it like? *Allow time for discussion.*

### VIDEO: Up (Opening Montage)

- If you haven't already experienced a challenging change in your family dynamic, you will.
- We all deal with times of transition, but we don't all respond to change in the same way.

- Keep that in mind as we watch this clip. *Play the opening montage of the movie Up.*
- Carl Fredricksen wasn't always a grumpy old man, but in the midst of so many changes in his life, he forgot who he was. He forgot how his love for adventure used to give him joy.
- Life isn't always a straight line, and the bumps can be disorienting, confusing, frustrating, and sad — especially when it comes to our family.
- When our families change we can sometimes forget who we are or where we used to find our joy, even before we grow old like Mr. Fredricksen.
- Some people ride those waves and seem just fine, but for most of us, change can be tricky. Even when the changes aren't necessarily bad changes, they can still be difficult to navigate.

## SO WHAT?

### PROP: A Compass

- *Before you begin teaching, make sure you have a compass (or at least a compass app) in your pocket. Take it out and hold it.*
- Has anyone here ever gone hiking? If you have, you're probably familiar with a compass.
- When you're out in the woods and in unfamiliar territory, it's so easy to get lost, confused, or disoriented.
- When a hike takes you to an unexpected place, a compass is the tool you need to help yourself get back on track.
- A compass is helpful because, no matter how lost you feel, your compass always points to true north. It stays steady. It gives you a point of reference. It's trustworthy.

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23:1-6.

- I don't know about you, but my family has experienced quite a few changes over the years — both good and bad. I know what it's like to feel suddenly lost or afraid because of change.
- But for me, God continues to be my center. He's the one constant that, like this compass, keeps me on track. The same is true for a man we read about in the Bible, King David.
- King David is given credit as the author of many of the psalms, which are the poems and songs we read in the biblical book of Psalms. If you remember the Sunday school story about David and Goliath, this is the same David.
- David became king of Israel, but he came from humble beginnings. He was the youngest in his family, a shepherd, and his older brothers didn't think much of his physical prowess. From herding sheep to ruling a kingdom — that's a pretty big change.
- Before he became king though, David had to run from King Saul, the king before David who wanted to kill him. He didn't have a stable home to return to. He didn't know who he could trust.
- Our families and our own lives are just like the stories in Scripture. They aren't always predictable or planned. Even so, listen to what David wrote. *Read Psalm 23:1-6.*
- David knew all about unexpected and difficult changes, but He still wrote this psalm. He describes God as being our shepherd. He leads us. He stays with us. He comforts us. His goodness and His love follows us wherever we go. God is always there.
- We don't have to be afraid, David says, because no matter what situation we're faced with and no matter what changes we experience, He's with us. He's our true north.

## NOW WHAT?

### RESPONSE: Rewrite Psalm 23:4

- *Before your program, be sure to place a blank sheet of paper under each seat, along with a pen.*
- For the next few minutes, I want us to focus on verse 4 of this psalm. Actually, I want you to personalize it.
- Think about the changes that you're currently facing, or that you might face soon. Maybe it's a big move or a change in your family structure. Maybe you're moving up to high school or college next year. Maybe you're facing the loss of a loved one. On that sheet of paper, here's what I want you to do. *Put Psalm 23:4 on the screen.*
  - Write, "Even though . . ." and then write down whatever change is on your mind.
  - Next write, "I won't fear . . ." and write whatever frightens you most about that change.
  - Finally, write, "Because You are with me."
  - *Create a personal example from your own life and read it.*
- Let's take a few minutes to talk to God and respond to this verse. *Play some soft music.*

### LET GOD BE YOUR CENTER

- Change can be scary (especially when it's our family that's changing), but it's inevitable.
- When your family begins to change and you find those changes difficult to navigate, I hope you'll remember what we talked about today. I hope you'll remember this compass.
- And I hope you'll remember that, **when your family changes, God remains your center.**



## modernfamilies

**Psalm 23:4** - Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Rewrite Psalm 23:4 in your own examples

### **Even though...**

Write a change happening or hard situation in your life

### **I won't fear...**

Write what frightens you most about the change

### **Because you are with me.**

Talk to God and Remember He is with you

## modernfamilies

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Talk to God and Remember He is with you

# WEEK 3

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

modernfamilies

### THIS SERIES

It should only take a quick look around to realize there are no perfect families (not even in the Bible), but that doesn't stop us from comparing our families' quirks, flaws, and shortcomings to the seemingly perfect lives of other families. In this 4-week series, you'll challenge students to **give their families grace, seek resolution to their conflicts, trust God through difficult transitions, and treat more friends like family.**

### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

When your family changes,  
God remains your center.

#### **THE BIBLE**

Psalm 23:1-6

- **In the last year, what's one way your family has changed in a positive way?**
- **In the last year, what's one way your family has changed in a negative way?**
- **What's one way your family is changing right now or will soon change?**
- **How do you feel about that change?**
- **What are the positives and negatives of that change?**
  
- **READ Psalm 23:1-6. What do you observe/ notice in this passage?**
- **What is a shepherd? Why would David write about a shepherd?**
- **What does it mean, 'the Lord is my shepherd'?**
- **Rewrite Psalm 23:4 (Use Card to assist this interactive.)**
  - **Even Though...** (Write a change/ hard situation in your life)
  - **I Won't Fear...** (write what frightens you most about the change)
  - **Remember: Because You (God) Are With Me.**
  - If you are willing, **Share what you wrote.**
  
- **In what ways can God be like a compass during times of transition?**
- **What's one thing you can do this week to let God be your center?**

*WHO IS YOUR ONE?*

## THE BIG IDEA

Your family is bigger than you think.

### WHAT?

#### ACTIVITY: The Follower Count

- I want to try something. If you have your phone with you and you have at least one social media account, come to the front. (*NOTE: If you have a larger group, you can adapt this activity by choosing a handful of students who believe they have the most social media followers out of everyone else in the room. If most of your students do not have phones or social media presences, you can adapt this activity by asking them to count the number of friends they have.*)
- Together, open your favorite social media app so we can all see how many followers you have.
- When everyone is ready, ask them, one by one, how many followers they have. Then, line them up in order from fewest followers to most followers.
- Okay, now tell me this.
  - How many of those followers do you know in real life?
  - How many of your followers would you trust with your most prized possession?
  - How many of your followers would you trust with your darkest secret?

#### FOLLOWERS, FRIENDS, OR FAMILY?

- Maybe you're wondering why we're talking about followers in a series called *Modern Families*.
- That's because, sometimes, our "family" is bigger than just our blood relatives . . . but it's probably not as big as your list of Instagram followers.
- For some of us, "family" includes aunts and uncles who aren't actually related to us, but they play an important role in our families.
- For others, "family" includes the friends who've stuck by us in difficult situations, the adults who've mentored us, or our friends' parents who treat us like one of their own.

#### STORY: Talk about a friend you consider family.

*Tell a story about a person in your own life who you consider family, even though they're not technically related to you. Maybe it's an individual, or maybe it's a group of people, like the best friends you've had since college or your best friend's family. Tell your students about them and what makes your relationship with them so special.*

## SO WHAT?

**WE NEED MORE THAN JUST OUR RELATIVES**

- For the last few weeks, we've been talking about our families – parents, siblings . . . you get the idea. But today I think it's important we close this series by talking about the people who act like our families, even though they're not related to us.
- These people matter because sometimes our real families let us down in big ways.
- Even when our families are healthy and good, our family members aren't the only people we need in our lives.

**VIDEO: Kaden Wilson's Story**

- It reminds me of this story from Houston, Texas. Kaden has an incredible family, but even at seven years old, it's obvious that Kaden (like you and me) wants and needs a community outside his immediate family. Let's watch his story. *Play [this clip](#) (or something similar).*
- Not everyone comes from a big family where a birthday party can be a big deal. I couldn't believe how many strangers rallied together and formed a community around Kaden for his birthday.
- We don't know if any of the guests will become friends or if the community will continue to provide support for Kaden and his family, but I believe this is a glimpse at what God designed family and community to be.

**SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:42-47**

- Throughout the New Testament, but especially in the book of Acts, we get a look at what true Christian community looked like in the early church. *Read Acts 2:42-47.*
- God designed His Church (not this building, but His people) to embody this kind of community. As believers, it has always been God's hope that we would act like family to each other.
- This picture in the book of Acts isn't just about people coming together to eat and pray. They loved each other enough to pool together their resources, just like Kaden's community did for his birthday.
- These stories are both about community – the kind of community that is so big, so deep, and so generous that it actually feels like family. That's what God's family is supposed to look like.
- Whether your family is awesome or . . . well, not-so-awesome, this is true: **your family is bigger than you think because God has a big family.**

## NOW WHAT?

**GOD'S FAMILY SHOULD ACT LIKE FAMILY**

- Sometimes we're not very good at this though. We don't always treat other Jesus-followers like family, let alone people who don't follow Jesus.
- So here's what I want us to do. As we finish up this series on family, I want us to think about the ways we treat each other more like family – but not just any family. Let's think about how we can be the biggest, most generous, forgiving, loving, affirming family any of us have ever seen.
- Just like our biological families, we'll never be a perfect family. But when we choose to treat each other more like family, we help God's family become more of what God always intended it to be. Here's how . . .
  - **LOVE WHO'S HERE.** Look around this room. We are all part of God's family. No matter what church you go to, what language you speak, or what kind of family you have, if we follow Jesus, we are part of God's family. So let's act like it!
  - **LOVE WHO'S NOT HERE.** God's family treats everyone like family – even the people who aren't yet members of His family.
  - **INVITE SOMEONE HERE. WHO IS YOUR ONE?** Think again about all your friends and followers. How many of them have you ever invited to church or to small group? If this family has been good to you and you love being here, why not extend an invitation? It's not about getting more people to church. It's about what they're missing out on by not being part of God's family. And it's about what you and I are missing by not having that person here with us. Chances are, we're missing out on the privilege of knowing someone who God calls His son or daughter. So who are we missing?

**RESPONSE: Send an Invitation**

- *Before your program, prepare a variety of ways for students to invite a friend to church or to an upcoming event. We recommend offering both paper and digital invitations so students can give, mail, text, or post the invitations. If you'd like to use the graphics we've provided with this series, they can be found in your Week 4 folder.*
- As we close out this series, I want to challenge you to invite someone new into God's family. You can't control what they do with your invitation. Your job is simply to invite them.
- Because, remember, **your family is bigger than you think** because God has a big family – a family that's always getting bigger.

**YOU'RE  
INVITED**

**YOU'RE  
INVITED**

**YOU'RE  
INVITED**

**YOU'RE  
INVITED**



**YOU'RE  
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# WEEK 4

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

modernfamilies

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### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

Your family is bigger than you think.

#### **THE BIBLE**

Acts 2:42-47

- **Is there anyone you consider family, even though you're not related? Who?**
- **Where do you find community outside your immediate family?**
- **Why is it important to have a community outside our immediate family?**
- **Give an example of how our church community treats each other like family.**
  
- **READ Acts 2:42-47. What stands out to you in this passage?**
  - **How did they treat one another?**
  - **How did they handle their resources?**
  - **What might it look like for you to live out your faith today?**
  
- **How can our small group/ our church community be better at treating each other like family?**
- **How could you do a better job of loving who's here at church?**
- **How could you do a better job of loving who's not here?**
- **What's keeping you from inviting more friends to church?**
- **Who is one person you're going to invite into our church family this week?**

*WHO IS YOUR ONE?*