



# 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.**