

# Family Matters: Surviving & Thriving at Home Series

## Adopted Into God's Family

**Overview:** You'll help teenagers understand the concept of belonging, and how it impacts our commitment to following Jesus. You'll also help them explore what it means to be adopted by God, and how that affects their own identity.

**Supplies:** You'll need Bibles, a way to display a website, 3x5 cards, pencils, and a "testimony" from an adopted person. (Ask someone from your church or youth ministry who was adopted to share with the group what it means to be adopted. He or she either can attend in person or write down some thoughts that you'll read. Instruct the volunteer to focus on the positive aspects of adoption.) Beforehand, check out the "Which figure does not belong?" four-question logic quiz at [http://www.syllum.com/cgi/online/mult.cgi/iq/ar\\_oddo1.tdf?0](http://www.syllum.com/cgi/online/mult.cgi/iq/ar_oddo1.tdf?0). Be sure to select "Score and Show Answers" at the end of your quiz so you understand the rationale behind each question.

### 1. Opening

Explain the logic test from the website and show students one question at a time. Have them work in trios to figure out the "odd one out" for each set of images.

When trios are finished, gather as a large group. Reveal the correct answers and see if kids can explain the reasoning behind them. Then lead into a broader exploration of "belonging" with this...

Say: **Deciding what or who belongs in a group, and what or who doesn't belong, is just an analytical thing when it comes to IQ tests like this one. But when it comes to relationships, that's a different story. All of us want to belong, and it's painful when we feel like we don't belong in a group or a family. (Tell a personal story of an experience of "not belonging.")**

### 2. Bible Connection

Say: **What does it really mean to belong, anyway? We know what it feels like to be accepted into a relationship, and we know what it's like to feel rejected.**

Ask the group:

- **In your friend group, what are some common features that make it "natural" for everyone to belong in the group?**
- **Ultimately, what makes a person truly belong to a family?**
- **Ultimately, what makes an adopted child truly belong to a family?**

Say: **The word *huiiothesia* (pronounced who-ee-oth-isia) is taken from Greco-Roman law. It refers to the adoption as sons of those who weren't sons by birth. A well-to-do but childless adult who wanted an heir would adopt a male, usually at an age beyond infancy (and frequently a slave), to be his son. Literally, a slave with no hope and no future could have his whole life change in an instant, as long as the right person took notice and decided to adopt him. Let's pause to explore how this word—*huiiothesia*—shows up in Paul's writings in the New Testament...**

Ask trios to explore Paul's usage of *huiothesia* in Romans 8:15-17, 23; Galatians 4:4-7; and Ephesians 1:5—and then discuss these questions:

- **How do these passages help you better understand the meaning of *huiothesia*?**
- **What impact does this understanding have for your own relationship with Jesus?**

Allow about 7 minutes for reading and discussion. Then ask a few students to share their insights with the whole group. In the context of kids' insights, emphasize these truths:

- **It's God pursuing us—choosing us to adopt into his family—not us pursuing God. He wants to do this, because it “gives him great pleasure.”**
- **Only those who are aware of their great need can truly celebrate God's “adoption rescue.”**
- **Our outlook on life, and our beliefs about God and ourselves, are all greatly impacted by our incredible “promotion” from slave to heir.**

### 3. Digging Deeper

Next, have the guest you invited speak briefly about adoption (or read aloud the person's comments). Make sure the person speaks only about his or her personal story of adoption, not “spiritual adoption.”

Afterward, ask:

- **What did you hear in this story that reminds you of what your life is like, as an adopted son or daughter of God?**

Tell a personal story about how you have struggled to embrace your reality as an adopted son or daughter of God, and an experience that has helped you to accept this new reality. Then say: **When someone adopts you, it's a sign of love and acceptance. It also represents a total commitment.** Read aloud John 10:27-29. **You see, when you're part of God's family, it's permanent. You'll always belong to him—nothing can separate you from his love. He won't—and can't—stop loving you, no matter what. And he doesn't love you because he's “supposed to.” He loves you because he created you from the inside out, and he cherishes all the subtle little things that make you unique. He wants you to enjoy the kind of relationship he has with his Father...forever.**

Ask: **If you know you are secure and loved as an adopted member of God's family, how can that impact the way you relate to the people in your earthly family—the people you live with every day?**

Let students know you're available afterward to talk, if anyone wants to discuss their role in God's family.

### 4. Closing

Give students each a 3x5 card and a pencil. Have them create their own written prayer on the theme of adoption. Allow time for students to pray silently using their written prayers.

Then wrap up by praying aloud.