



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.