

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.