

Living as Children of God



Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Gen. 3:5; Ps. 51:4; Isa.1:2; John 1:12; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 John 3:1–10.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Define and understand what it means to be a child of God in a family setting.

This includes their family of origin, their work, and/or student family, or other social settings which operate as a family.

► Discuss and plan specific and identifiable ways to reflect to others what it

means to be a child of God and a member of His family.

► Learn specific times, dates, places, and means by which to demonstrate to others what it is to be a child of God in order to act on the first two aims of this lesson.

Preparing to Lead

The New Testament was written in a society ruled by the Roman Empire.

Rome had customs understood by all the writers and initial readers of every book in the New Testament. One of those Roman practices was “exposure.” When a child was born, the midwife would place it naked on a cloth on the ground. The father would view the infant and either

pick it up—thus claiming it as his own and taking responsibility to nurture and raise the child—or walk away without claiming it. If the father walked away, the infant would be left on the cloth to die of dehydration and exposure. Our heavenly Father chose to pick us up. We are His. What does that mean, and how do we live as members of His family?

Materials

flipchart/blackboard/whiteboard and appropriate markers; various strengths and/or sizes of magnets; paper clips, tacks, pins, and small nails to use with the magnets; infant-size, unclothed doll, and a cloth or towel; Bibles

Getting Started

A. Have the class think of and list items pertaining to the following: (1) general traits of a family; (2) traits of a child of God or a family member of His family. List as many traits as they can think of. Begin a column for each, comparing and contrasting them as the lists grow.

B. Show several sizes and strengths of magnets, from the “refrigerator-door” type of very light magnets to more pow-

erful magnets. Demonstrate how they attract metallic objects such as paper clips, pins, nails, etc. Note that the stronger the magnet, the more items it attracts and the more it energizes those items to attract even more items. Also note that the magnets have polarity where they push apart, just as we are to push away from evil living.

Delving Into the Word

A. If you have used alternative A in Getting Started, have the class look at all

the texts in Surveying the Source to discover specific family traits and behaviors

mentioned in the texts. Write each text by the corresponding listed traits in each column. Look for both positive traits and negative traits/issues to be avoided. Solicit other traits and texts from the class. Discuss how these traits impact other people both in and beyond the family of God. Stay with the biblical texts!

B. If you used alternative B in Getting Started, then break down the textual materials under the categories Children of the Light and Children of the Darkness.

One way to do this is to break the class into two groups, with each group looking at all the texts and then reporting to the other group what they have found. Lead your discussion based on class discovery and input. Discuss specific behaviors which *attract* people to God as well as those which *repel* people from Him— noting that we can do either. Discuss ways when the attraction is less or when lost pieces fall away from the magnetically gathered group.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What are the adoption laws in your location? What are the processes? The costs? The long-term implications? In Roman law, you could disown a naturally born child, but once adopted, you could never disown that child. The adopted child could walk away from the parents, but the parents could never abandon or disclaim that child. What are the spiritual implications of this historical fact in light of the Bible telling us that we are God's children by adoption through Jesus?

2. How would/could you explain to your child or sibling that she or he is adopted? When would you begin that process? At infancy? Two years of age? At 22? What are the implications of when you would tell them and how you would tell them? How does that apply spiritually?

3. Whom do you know who is adopted?

What behavioral or other traits have they picked up from their adoptive family? How does that apply spiritually?

4. If you found out tomorrow that you were adopted, how would that affect your identity? Your view of life? Your relationship with your parents?

5. How have you experienced someone behaving as a child of God? How did that impact your life?

6. Who in your environment is struggling with their family identity? How can you be supportive? Be specific.

7. Do you obey out of obligation or out of appreciation? What have been transition points in your Christian growth when you have moved from obligation to appreciation in you obedience to God? If obligation is 1 and appreciation is 10 on a line, what would your number be right now?

Closing the Activity

This is the “so what?” part of the lesson where it is critically important to move students from understanding to action which is observable, doable, and measurable. You can reproduce and use the worksheet (p. 37), or lead by discussion

of the worksheet in small groups of three or four. The groups will be invited to share with each other what their commitments are, and to pray with and for each other as they move to practical applications of the lesson.

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The purpose of this worksheet is to prompt specific responses and commitments to live as a child of God in my immediate environment and to do so with specific target dates for those specific behaviors. An example would be:

I plan to grow by:

- spending 15 minutes per day reading my Bible starting this Sunday, or
- looking for ways to help someone with their studies before exams.

I plan to show results by:

- inviting three people to pray with and for me by next Wednesday and by praying for them during my private worship time daily, or
- monitoring my tendency to gossip or criticize starting now!

Because I am a child of God, I, _____, plan to *grow* in Him by:

_____ Starting date of _____

_____ Starting date of _____

_____ Starting date of _____

I plan to *show* the results by:

_____ Date to be done _____

_____ Date to be done _____

_____ Date to be done _____

Signed and dated: _____

Witnesses and prayer partners: _____
