

PREPARATION:

Since this lesson deals with family relationship, you need to be sensitive to persons in your fellowship who have suffered from painful family relationships. (You will need to provide assurance of God's grace in accepting us into His family despite our life backgrounds. Stress the power of forgiveness through God's grace.) The scriptures for this lesson are especially likely to lead unsaved people to accept Christ. You need to be sensitive to them during the meeting and provide an opportunity for salvation. (Be sure to give thanks for any souls that have been saved at any meeting when this happens!) Never underestimate the power of prayer! Pray much during the week preceding this lesson.

Notes:

PURPOSES:

1. To learn to appreciate what it means to be a child of God
 2. To see how this makes us a part of the family of God
 3. To realize that the home group may become a part of our spiritual family
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DIGGING DEEPER:

John 3:1-21, Hebrews 2:10-18, Romans 8:14-17, I John 3:1-10, 5:1-5

SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU LEAD THE GROUP:**Complete the Sentence...**

Start the cell meeting with an open-ended sentence. Here are some examples to pick from, some to chuckle over and some to provoke thought:

Light hearted or humorous beginnings

- "My most embarrassing moment was when..."
 - "One of the best times of my life was. . ."
 - "If I had a million dollars, I would..."
 - "My idea of a perfect evening is..."
 - "What I want for Christmas is..."
 - "When I am 70 years old I want to be doing. . ."
 - "My favorite time of day is. . ."
 - "One thing I enjoy about my job (or school) is ..."
 - "The fastest I ever drove is. . ."
 - "My favorite dessert is..."
 - "My favorite Bible verse is. . ."
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Sharing Starters

- "I want to praise God for ..."
 - "What I'm thankful for this week is ..."
 - "Someone blessed me by doing ..."
 - "My toughest experience happened when ..."
 - "I'm working at... in my life."
 - "Some personal vision I have for my life is. . ."
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Asking these questions on a regular basis can help keep everyone sharp:

- "What God is speaking personally to me is. . ."
 - "What I am learning from the people I am ministering to is ..."
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OPENING PRAYER/WORSHIP (10 minutes)

"Dear -Lord:

We give You thanks that we may be called your children and may be a part of Your family. We know that where two or three gather in the name of Your Son, Jesus, He has promised to be present. We ask now for Your direction and guidance. Please help us to learn to be obedient to Your will and Your Word in all we say and do _____ (Special prayer requests and/or thanksgivings may be added here.) In Jesus' name, Amen."

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPECIAL OFFERINGS (5 minutes)

GETTING STARTED (20 minutes)

Start the discussion by asking, "Would anyone like to share something interesting about their family background?" (After one person shares, give opportunity for other people to follow. No one should feel pressured and don't allow one or two people dominate). Follow this with a statement like, "No matter what our background, we may all become members of the family of God by believing in His Son. Just as we become members of a natural family through natural birth, we become part of a spiritual family by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We ask each of you to pray for this home group as a part of your spiritual family."

HEARING THE WORD (10 minutes)

Here's what John said about those who believe in Jesus: *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."* John 1:12-13

Discuss and emphasize how this must be a personal choice for each person!

Let's see what Jesus Himself said about this new family relationship:

"While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to Him. Someone told Him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You". He replied to him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" Pointing to His disciples. He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers". Matthew 12:46-49

Spend some time discussing **how** we have many relatives when we become members of God's family. (All other believers worldwide - past, present, and future!) Since we believe in Jesus, we now have eternal life.

Jesus said: "...the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." John 3:14-17

DOING THE WORD (10 minutes)

Have the people in the home group suggest ways that might build a family feeling within the group, such as:

1. Telling someone you've enjoyed getting to know them
2. Phoning someone during the week to see how they're doing
3. Having lunch with someone
4. Sharing favorite photos with another person
5. Praying that God develop a sense of family in the home group

As the leader, please think about your own propositions ahead of time. Don't forget to look at the ideas that we give to help you in every lesson.

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS/ANSWERS (5 minutes)

GROUP PRAYER (15 minutes)