

youthESource Bible Study

All in the Family

A Bible Study about Family Relationships - Leader's Guide

by Sara Borgstede

*This study uses the movie *The Giver* as a basis for discussion. The movie came out in Fall 2014, and many students read the book as part of class discussion in middle school. Consider watching the movie as a group, with parent permission, once it becomes available on video. The movie is rated PG-13. Here is a parent guide to what elements are in the movie: <https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-giver>. Be prepared to discuss some of the important themes.*

Throughout the study, be sensitive to students who may be struggling with difficult family situations, spoken or unspoken.

Read aloud:

The movie *The Giver*, based on a novel of the same name by author Lois Lowry, has a number of interesting themes to consider. Although not a Christian movie, we can look at the story to learn from it as part of this Bible study about families.

Here is a trailer (approved for all ages) to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Fq1yXBJuHo>

If possible, show trailer in class.

The plot of *The Giver* is about a futuristic dystopian society where almost all freedom of choice has been taken away. A famous line from the movie is, "When people have the freedom to choose, they choose wrong." The story touches on themes of free will, abortion, euthanasia and the role of government. Both the book and the movie have been controversial and the book has been banned in some schools because of its serious themes.

While people are placed into "family units" in *The Giver*, it is not in the way we think of families. People in this pretend world do not fall in love or even know the concept of love. The government chooses children for parents and they simply live together for the convenience of raising children in an orderly fashion. Once children are raised to adulthood, the family unit is disbanded.

In order to promote peace and unity, this society encourages sameness. The more people who are the same, the less there is jealousy and strife. Colors, emotions and seasons have all been done away with in order to promote equilibrium.

Discussion

1. Think about your family. Real life families are messy! The ways we are different can be great, but can also be what creates strife in a family. What are some of the characteristics within your family that are different for each person? How do these create conflict?
Answers will vary. Consider personalities, likes and dislikes, introvert and extrovert, night owl vs. morning person, etc.
2. What do you think would happen if some of these differences were somehow magically eliminated within your family?
Accept all variety of answers. Perhaps life would be easier, but we would lose a lot too.

3. What would it be like to live in a society with sameness? What would be some of the advantages? Disadvantages?

Various answers. More unity, but as in the movie, much was sacrificed in order to keep sameness.

Digging Deeper

Divide into teams. For each of the following Bible passages, together with your team decide, to whom is the Bible verse giving direction? What is the direction being given?

<u>Bible Verse</u>	<u>To Whom Verse is Speaking?</u>	<u>Direction Being Given?</u>
Exodus 20:12	<i>Israelites (all people)</i>	<i>Honor your father and mother</i>
Proverbs 1:8	<i>Son</i>	<i>Listen to your father's instruction. Do not forsake your mother's teaching.</i>
Colossians 3:21	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Do not embitter your children.</i>
Ephesians 6:4	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Do not exasperate your children. Train children in the Lord.</i>
Proverbs 13:24	<i>(Parents)</i>	<i>Love your children enough to discipline.</i>
1 Peter 4:8	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Love each other deeply. Love covers sins.</i>

Discussion

1. What lessons from the verses above will you apply to your family situation when you go home today? Which are the most challenging for you? Which are the easiest?
Accept various answers.
2. Our government did not put your family together like in *The Giver* – but God did! Why do you think He chose such different people and personalities to put together within one family? How do you see Him using those differences within your family for His glory?
God had a plan for using each of us together in our families. Working together in a family molds us and teaches us to love and serve others.
3. You have an important role within your family. No one else can contribute to your family what is unique to you. In what significant ways do you contribute to your family?
Encourage students to dig deep and think about their unique contributions to their family. How would their family look totally different if he/she were not a part of it? Each of us is special and important, and has a significant role to play!
4. Your family also plays an important role for your neighborhood, your church and society as a whole. What does your family contribute to your community that only your family can bring? Are there some new ways you would like to see your family share Jesus with the world?
Again, encourage students to think deeply. How is my family serving within my neighborhood, school, church and community? How could we serve in new ways? God has a plan for our family and placed us where we are for a reason.

Closing Prayer

In the space below, list the names of each of your family members. As time allows, write the names of grandparents, aunts and uncles and close family friends who are family or like family to you. After each name, write a short thank you prayer. (It doesn't even need to be in a complete sentence – God understands!) Thank God for the blessing this person brings to your family and to you personally. Your leader will give you time for

silent prayer at the end of this section. Then go home and SAY thank you to these people. You will brighten their whole week!

A Thank You Prayer for My Family Members:

Give students time to list individual names and then take time for silent prayer for each individual. If you are in a church, move into the sanctuary for the closing silent prayer time to encourage prayerful worship time. Close with a group prayer, thanking God for our family members.

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