

FAMILIA

WEEK 1 (HYBRID)

BIG IDEA

In God's family we support each other.

Bible

Galatians 5:13-14 & 22-23, 6:1-3 & 9-10; Matthew 11:28-30

WHAT?

QUESTION | "What's your most annoying household chore?"

- Welcome to *Familia*, a new series that's all about family — the good, the bad, and the annoying. **In your home, what's your most annoying household chore and why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

STORY | Talk about a chore you hated doing as a teenager.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or have a volunteer or student tell a story) about a chore you hated doing as a teenager — and be dramatic! This is your chance to whine, complain, and try to get a few laughs.

POLL | "What's your grocery strategy?"

- Does anyone love grocery shopping? We all love *having* groceries, but the process of getting them, carrying them, and putting them away is annoying. No matter how many pounds of groceries I buy, you can guarantee I will try to carry them inside my place with just one trip.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have students reply to the following questions by raising their hands or cheering.
- **How about you? What's your grocery strategy? Do you . . .**
 - Grab all the groceries at once, no matter how many bags there are?
 - Think it's better to go slow and take a few trips?
 - Run for the bathroom to hide in hopes the job will be finished before you come out?

ACTIVITY | Get the Groceries

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need a table, a tablecloth, two identical sets of groceries that are heavy, bulky, or weirdly shaped, tape to mark the finish line, and a timer.

Before your teaching time, set the two identical piles of groceries on the table, cover them with the table cloth, and mark a finish line with tape. To play, a team of one person will need to race a team of four people to the finish line without dropping any of their groceries. First, call a team of four to the front and assign them the first set of groceries. Next, ask anyone if they think they could beat the team of four single-handedly. When the race begins, the players must grab all their groceries and carry them to finish line. This activity can be used as simply a demonstration where the single player has no chance of winning, but if you'd like it to be a competitive game instead:

- Tell the single player they can carry as many items as they want at a time.
- Tell the team of four they can each only carry one item at a time, so they'll need to run back and forth until all their groceries are moved.
- If the single player drops any items, they can pick them up after they've delivered the rest of their groceries.
- While it may sometimes feel like we can handle things on our own, there's a lot of benefit to having other people around to help and support us. That's what our families are meant to do.
- Family can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Your family could be . . .
 - The people you live with.
 - The people you're related to.
 - The people you've chosen to love like family.
 - It could even be the family of God — people all over the world, and all throughout history, who follow Jesus.
- We're talking about *familia* — that's Spanish for "family," but you'll learn it in a few more languages too by the time we're done.
 - Think of it as a reminder that no matter who we are, where we live, what language we speak, or what circumstances we were born into, we all need "family."
 - Sometimes we choose our family and sometimes we don't get a choice. But no matter what "family" looks like for you, for the next few weeks, we're going to see what Scripture shows us about getting along with our families a bit better.

SO WHAT?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
 - **Describe your family in one word. Now say more!**
 - **Who do you consider your family?**

STORY | Talk about a time you blew up at your family.

- When I said families are supposed to support each other, of course, I didn't only mean on a grocery run. You might need support when you're feeling . . .
 - Discouraged or let down.
 - Stressed out.
 - Sad.
 - Angry.
 - Confused or unsure.
- When we're feeling weighed down, it can be hard to ask for the support we need. When we're not sure how to deal with it or ask for help, it's easy to take things out on the people who are closest to us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you blew up at your family because of a burden you'd been trying to carry on

your own. Share what burdens you were carrying (like stress at school, conflict in one of your friendships, or the stress that comes with life changes like graduation or puberty) and how you took it out on your family. Then share what you wish you had communicated and what support you needed.

- No matter what burden you're carrying, it's always better to ask for support than to try to handle it on your own. That's because you and I were designed to need each other!

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
 - * **When's the last time you blew up at your family? What burdens were you carrying that led up to that moment?**
 - * **How could your family have supported you better that day? What could you have done differently too?**
 - **What are some of the things our family members might sometimes struggle with that we don't know about?**

ACTIVITY | Family Photos

- I'm sure we can all think of moments when a family member gave us the support we needed during a tough time. And I'm sure we can all think of moments when that didn't happen. But today I don't want us to think about own needs. I want us to think about others.
 - Is there anyone in your family who might need support right now? Someone who might be feeling discouraged, stressed, sad, angry, confused, or unsure?
 - If you can't think of anyone, why do you think that is? Is it because everyone's life is totally perfect? Or is it just because you haven't thought about it recently?
- I know it can be difficult to feel compassionate or curious about our own family — especially the family members who are sometimes hard to like. But today, that's what I want to challenge you to do. **Who in your family might need some support right now?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite your students to take out their phones and scroll through their camera roll for a picture of someone in their family or community who might need support. Encourage them to favorite the photo or make it their lock screen.*

SCRIPTURE | Galatians 5:13-14

- Believe it or not, we can learn a lot about families (and family drama) from the Bible!
- Today we're going to look at a passage from the book of Galatians. Galatians was originally a letter, sent to a group of Jesus-followers in Galatia from a guy named Paul. In this particular letter, Paul was talking to a church family that had a few disagreements and conflict.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 5:13-14.*
- Hopefully your family doesn't actually bite each other when you're stressed out or angry, but you get the idea. This church family was getting so consumed by their disagreements with each other that Paul needed to jump in and correct them. He told them to . . .
 - Love each other like they love themselves.
 - Put each other before themselves.
 - Stop hurting each other.

SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:1-3

- It turns out a big part of the reason the Galatians were always fighting with each other was

because they were busy getting angry about each other's faults. They would notice someone else's sins or shortcomings and jump all over them for it.

- Think about your family for a second. Does that sound familiar? When one of your family members does something to make you angry, is your first reaction to blow up at them and point out their flaws?
- What if, instead of attacking or getting angry with them, you stopped to consider, "I wonder if they need some support right now?"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:1-3.*
- In a conflict, it is so easy for us to only think about ourselves, or to think about how the other person has wronged us. But just like we sometimes do things we regret when we need support, our family does too.
- When you notice a family member messing up, here's what Paul recommends . . .
 - Be gentle.
 - Work to make things better.
 - Help carry their burdens.
 - Don't think you're better than them.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
 - * **Why do you think it's so easy for us to notice our family members' faults? What do you think they would say about your faults?**
 - **Instead of getting angry at a family member's faults, what do you think would happen if we saw those problems as burdens we could help them carry?**

SCRIPTURE | Galatians 6:9-10

- If you've ever struggled to do this for a family member (and who hasn't?) then these instructions from Paul might sound pretty difficult. That's why Paul says we need help from God's Spirit to . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Galatians 6:9-10.*
- Supporting each other (especially when we'd rather be mad at each other) is hard, tiring work. But Paul says not to give up and to keep supporting each other.
- Paul was talking about how to love each other in God's family of Jesus-followers, but this matters for our actual families too. No matter what you or your family members believe about Jesus, imagine how things in your family might change if you decided to support your loved ones instead of attack them.

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 11:28-30

- But it can be hard to support others when we don't feel supported ourselves. If you've been there, listen to what Jesus says.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 11:28-30.*
- No matter how awesome our family or friends are, they still can't give us the care and rest that Jesus can. In him, we can find the strength we need to carry not just our own burdens, but to help carry the burdens of others as well.
- Just like Jesus loves us by giving us rest when we're burdened, Paul says we can love each other by "carrying each other's burdens" too. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
 - * **When you notice a family member's faults, what would it look like to follow Paul's instructions to *gently* help them make it right?**
 - **Read Galatians 5:22-23. Which of these qualities do you most struggle with at home? How could that quality help you better support your family?**

4 WAYS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER

- Maybe you still need a few practical tips on how to support each other. If you choose to live these out in your home, your family relationships could change in big ways. When a family member needs support . . .
 - **ENCOURAGE THEM.** You can't support someone if you can't even encourage them. Think about a time when you were at a low point in your life or you were struggling with something, and someone encouraged you or reminded you who you really are. Did it change anything? Did it help you feel supported? Encouragement can go a long way, but we definitely don't do it as often as we could.
 - **BELIEVE THE BEST.** This step may be one of the hardest. Some of you have walked through awful circumstances or been really hurt by a family member. When that happens, it's easy to assume our family members will never change or that they're intentionally hurting us. But if you want your family to believe the best about you, try going first by believing the best about them. The more you do, the more likely you'll be to look past their outbursts and mistakes and be able to see both their good intentions and the ways they need your support.
 - **BE TRUSTWORTHY.** It isn't easy to trust your family when they've broken your trust, let you down, or disappointed you. You can't make your family worthy of your trust, but you can make sure you're worthy of theirs. Modeling trustworthiness can change the dynamics of your family in big ways.
 - **TRUST GOD.** Your family members will continue making mistakes. So will you. But when you make it a habit to trust God with the burdens you and your family are carrying, you'll quickly see there is nothing too big or too difficult for Jesus to carry. No matter how big the burden, Jesus has got it.
- These steps can make a big difference in your relationships and in your family, but I'll be honest — they can't fix everything. Not every family conflict is simple or easily resolved.
 - If your family conflicts feel so big you're not sure they'll ever be fixed, bring that burden to Jesus. Do what you can do support your family, but remember, it's not your responsibility to fix everyone else's problems. It's not possible!
 - Or if your doesn't have any major problems right now, that's great! Your loved ones may not be carrying huge burdens right now, but you still have the opportunity to love and support them in small but very important ways.
- Your family may not look like the families of the people sitting next to you, or of your friends, or of the families you see in movies. But that's okay. No matter what your family looks like, God still wants to work in your family.
- And remember, you're not alone. Your "family" can include a lot of people — including people you've chosen to love like family, like the people in this room. We're here to support you as you look for ways to support your family. Because **in God's family, we support each other.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
 - **This week, how can you better support one person in your family?**