



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Family Matters / Week 4

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

**It matters to have more people
than your family.**

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that they can (and should) widen the circle of their family to include a few significant relationships with close friends and mentors.

SCRIPTURE

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself (1 Samuel 18:1-3 NIV).

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out” (1 Samuel 19:1-3 NIV).

Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death” (1 Samuel 19:6 NIV).

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- *Communicator note: Tell a personal story about friends you spent a lot of time with growing up—friends who were like family to you.*
- Looking back, I think I know why I spent so much time there: I loved being around a family that I thought had it all together.

TENSION

- You’ve probably noticed that sometimes it seems like other families have something going for them that your family doesn’t.
- Whatever it is that *they* have, your family simply doesn’t measure up.

- Regardless of your family experience, good or bad, memorable or forgettable, no family is perfect.
- And because of that, your family (and my family) will never be able to provide *everything* we need in life. In one way or another, family will let us down.
- But what if God WANTS TO and CAN give you more family? But what if that wasn't out of the question?

TRUTH

- When you think about dysfunctional families, the Bible is full of them. Meaning, the people God has always used to do big things in His world have never been perfect. Which is great news for all of us.
- We're going to look at two guys from the Old Testament, David and Jonathan, who came from less than ideal families.
- In the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel, we are introduced to their friendship. Jonathan is the son of the current king of Israel. David has been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the future king. In any other situation, David and Jonathan should've never been friends.
- But God had different plans. And even with all that being true, they were still friends. (*1 Samuel 18:1-3 NIV*).
- These two needed each other at a time when they weren't getting much from their families. Whatever family was "supposed" to look like, it didn't look that way for either of these guys.
- Later, Jonathan even looked out for David's life (*1 Samuel 19:1-3 NIV*).
- So, Jonathan spoke well about David to his dad. He talked about all the good things David had done. And probably to the surprise of everyone, Saul changed his mind! (*1 Samuel 19:6 NIV*).
- Even though David was taking what would have rightly been Jonathan's place on the throne, Jonathan was an incredible friend to David.
- *All* of us need people like that in our lives!
- Remember, David and Jonathan found this in *each other* when their families were full of dysfunction. In other words, when there were gaps left by their families, they were able to find support from each other.
- Jesus established the church because He knew that we need other people in our lives.
- The church is the family of God—the body of Christ. It's a group of people uniquely connected by a love and commitment to Jesus and the way He lived and the messages He taught and what His coming back to life means for the world.
- It matters to have more people than your family. (*Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV*).
- We don't meet together as a church just because of habit or routine. We meet because it's essential. We meet for encouragement and support. We meet because we need each other.

APPLICATION

- But what does this look like in our lives right now?
 - Focus on widening your circle.
 - Talk about it.

LANDING

- Imagine if, in the next few years of your life, you had a group of people *outside* your family who felt like and acted like and loved you like family.
- Starting today, you can begin doing the work of building your bigger family. It won't happen overnight. Ask God to bring those people into your life.



TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

It matters to have more people than your family.

INTRODUCTION

3.5 MINUTES

Growing up, I had two best friends—Michael and Trent. If you had a best friend growing up, you know, you do a lot of things together. *A lot*. I spent a ton of time with them and their families. I ran errands with their moms, watched movies at their house, played basketball and tennis almost nonstop in their neighborhoods, ate dinner with their families, and almost went blind with the hours of video games we played together. And because I did, I had a close-up view of how their families worked and interacted with each other.

They both had incredible families: their families spent quality time together, talked together, and encouraged each other. Their siblings seemed to like each other, and their parents seemed to have incredible marriages. They even took vacations as a family every year. I would think, “Wait, you already spend all this time together at home, and now you’re *paying money* to spend more time together in another place?!”

At the time, I probably didn’t know why I liked spending so much time at their houses. But looking back, I think I know why: *I loved being around a family that I thought had it all together*. I thought their family was perfect. And if they weren’t perfect (which I know they weren’t, because no family is perfect), I *thought* they were perfect compared to my family!

It wasn’t that my family was horrible—it wasn’t. It was more that we weren’t very...anything. Basically, we just kind of existed around each other. We lived in the same house and orbited around each other like a dysfunctional solar system. Imagine the kind you made for your fifth-grade science project. For my family, the house was basically where we lived in our own rooms, and then ventured out on occasion to watch television and find snacks. And if any of us had the opportunity to leave and hang out somewhere else, we absolutely took it. In our family, we didn’t talk about anything meaningful, we didn’t do anything fun together, and we definitely didn’t take yearly vacations together. And when we did interact, there was fighting, yelling, and slamming of doors. All of this seemed totally normal—until I went to my friends’ houses.

I loved being around my friends' families so much that one night, after getting into a nasty argument with my dad, I told him that I wished Trent's dad was my dad. I mostly said it to hurt my dad, but I also said it because it was partly true.

TENSION

2.5 MINUTES

Maybe you've never said something as terrible as I did to you parents. If you haven't, congratulations. You're a better person than me. But even if you haven't reverted to the level of cruelty I did, you've probably noticed that **sometimes it seems like other families have something going for them that your family doesn't**. However we feel about our families, we may still have times where we look around and think, "Wow, it would be great if my family was more like *that!*"

- Maybe you've thought that about a family on TV.
- Or a friend's family.
- Or a family in your neighborhood or apartment complex.

And maybe seeing them makes you wish that your family was better, kinder, or closer. **Whatever it is that *they* have, your family simply doesn't measure up.**

Maybe for some of you, it isn't that you struggle comparing your family with another one. You simply don't feel like you have enough of a family to compare because your family has never looked traditional. Maybe your experience was one of foster homes and being moved around to different locations and having multiple caretakers over a number of different years.

Regardless of your family experience, good or bad, memorable or forgettable, **no family is perfect**. No family is even close to perfect. And because of that, your family (and my family) will never be able to provide *everything* we need in life. In one way or another, family will let us down. That's the bad news.

But what if God WANTS TO and CAN give you more family? (Don't worry. Your parents haven't told us there's a new sibling on the way). But what if that wasn't out of the question? I know that sounds crazy, but stick with me, because I think what we're talking about could be a game-changer when it comes to the way all of us view "family."

TRUTH

9 MINUTES

When you think about dysfunctional families, the Bible is full of them. Meaning, the people God has always used to do big things in His world have never been perfect. Which is great news for all of us. And what makes the Bible so amazing is that it doesn't try to hide the major dysfunction of the people in it. These aren't stories about flawless heroes. These are accounts of normal, unassuming, never expected men and women who God singles out to accomplish His will.

We're going to look at two guys from the Old Testament, David and Jonathan, who came from less than ideal families. Here are a few examples of what I mean:

- When David was a child, the prophet Samuel came to see David's father, Jesse, because he knew that one of Jesse's sons would be the anointed king. When Samuel asked Jesse to bring out all of his sons, Jesse didn't even bring out David. He thought that David wasn't even worth it! Ouch.
- On Jonathan's side, his mother seemed to be very passive and uninvolved. His father Saul was the exact opposite. He was overly involved, overly aggressive, and borderline crazy. He was obsessed with power, and was so set on defending it and keeping it that he tried to have David (who God had told would be the next king) killed on multiple occasions. Saul was definitely not winning any father of the year awards!

See what I mean? Totally dysfunctional. In fact, maybe that was what made David and Jonathan such good friends—the fact that they could relate with each other's crazy families. In the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel, we are introduced to their friendship. Jonathan is the son of the current king of Israel. David has been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the future king. In any other situation, David and Jonathan should've never been friends. In fact, they should've been rivals! Think about it: both of them had a claim to be the future king. Jonathan was in the family line and would have been next up, but God had different plans. And even with all that being true, they were still friends.

1 Samuel 18 describes their friendship this way:

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself (1 Samuel 18:1-3 NIV).

I don't know what kind of "covenant" or pact they made with each other, whether it was a document they signed or some kind of pinky swear, but they obviously took it very seriously.

These two needed each other at a time when they weren't getting much from their families.

David had been removed from his family and Jonathan's dad was officially crazy. Whatever family was "supposed" to look like, it didn't look that way for either of these guys.

Later, Jonathan even looked out for David's life. Check this out...

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out" (1 Samuel 19:1-3 NIV).

So, Jonathan spoke well about David to his dad. He talked about all the good things David had done. And probably to the surprise of everyone, Saul changed his mind! Check it out...

Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death" (1 Samuel 19:6 NIV).

This promise Saul made didn't last long. But hey, at least Jonathan tried!

Even though David was taking what would have rightly been Jonathan's place on the throne, Jonathan was an incredible friend to David.

1. He cared about David.
2. He looked out for David's life, future, and wellbeing.
3. He saw potential in David's life.

All of us need people like that in our lives. People who care about us and accept us no matter what. People who we can text when we've had the best week ever, or when life isn't going well at all. People who care about us enough to tell us when we've posted something we shouldn't and steer us in the right direction. People who see something bigger in us than we see in ourselves. **And if you are a person who would call yourself a Jesus-follower, you need people who will encourage you in your relationship with Him.**

But what does this have to do with family? Remember, David and Jonathan found this in *each other* when their families were full of dysfunction. In other words, when there were gaps left by their families, they were able to find support from each other. Did they replace family? Of course not. But they showed up for each other in a way family shows up for each other, even though they weren't related.

This is one of the reasons why Jesus established the church. Even though we often confuse "church" with a building, that's not what it is. The church has always been gathering of people first. The church is the family of God—the body of Christ. It's a group of people uniquely connected by a love and commitment to Jesus and the way He lived and the messages He taught and what His coming back to life means for the world. This body of Christ was created to be there for each other: to love one another, carry each other's burdens, and pray for each other. **Jesus established the church because He knew that we need other people in our lives.** Whatever your family looks like, you still need another type of family: a family that's larger than our immediate family.

Think of it this way...

It matters to have more people than your family.

The writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament says it this way:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV).

We don't meet together as a church just because of habit or routine. We meet because it's essential. We meet for encouragement and support. We meet because we need each other. And we let God and other people fill the potential gaps that have been left by our own families. And here's the secret: when you have those kinds of family-of-God relationships in your life, it can actually make your relationship with your own family *better*. They can help you understand each other better and care for each other better.

APPLICATION

3.5 MINUTES

But what does this look like in our lives right now? I think a couple of things...

1. **Focus on widening your circle.** Who are the people you can seek out to be a sort of bonus family? Who are the people who care about you? Who are the people who look out for your best interests? Who are the people who could see potential in you? Who would you love to be a part of your “family” that goes beyond the people you are related to? It doesn’t have to be people your age. Think about someone older than you who you trust—like a coach or small group leader.

If you can’t immediately think of someone who fits in this category, ask God to bring some people and keep your eyes open to the people who may already be in your life, or who God may put in your life in the future. It may be someone you wouldn’t expect! As you do that, work on being this kind of person for others. Work on caring about people, looking out for their best interests, and seeing the potential in them—being a sort of bonus family for others.

2. **Talk about it.** David and Jonathan “made a pact.” Sometimes, if we want people to be involved in our lives, we have to ask them. For example, if you want your small group leader to be like a mentor in your life, or to be someone who can ask you hard questions and hold you accountable, tell them. If you want your small group to be less like your classmates and more like brothers or sisters, somebody has to say that out loud. Naming what you want out of the relationship is important. So, let them know what you are thinking and be willing to reciprocate that for someone else or for your group!

LANDING

1 MINUTES

Imagine if, in the next few years of your life, you had a group of people *outside* your family who felt like and acted like and loved you like family. And what if those people actually encouraged you and pushed you to make life in your own home better.

Not only would that set you up for a better future, it would make your life more joyful. **It matters to have more people than your family.** Starting today, you can begin doing the work of building your bigger family. It won’t happen overnight. Ask God to bring those people into your life. Family matters: you can build a bigger one!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
