



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

FAM / Week 3

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SERIES SUMMARY

A four-week series on family.

WEEK 1: Loving your family is how your faith can make an impact.

WEEK 2: Your family doesn't have to be perfect for God to use it.

WEEK 3: When your family changes, God is with you.

WEEK 4: Sometimes friends are more like family.

SCRIPTURE

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).

Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you (Isaiah 41:10 MSG).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- No matter what they look like or who they're made up of, each of us has a family.
- The one thing every family experiences at some point is change. And change can be difficult.
- Tell a personal story about a time you experienced change in your family that was unwanted, unexpected, or out of your control. (Don't resolve the story yet.)

TENSION

- Maybe your family changed because . . .
 - You gained a new person in your family.
 - Someone in your family got sick or hurt.
 - You have a sibling that left the house.
 - Circumstances changed.
 - Something happened that was really painful.
- Regardless of the type of change you've experienced or are experiencing now, change isn't easy, and it usually doesn't feel good.
- So how do we handle it when our family changes?

TRUTH

- God knows the changes we're experiencing, and He promises to be with us through it all. Even when it feels like we're drowning or our family situation is on fire, God is with us. (Isaiah 43:2)
- When your family changes, God is with you.
- When we're fearful, feel weak, or are nervous about change, God will give us strength, help us, love us, and comfort us. He's the steady hand that holds us when the ground begins to shake. (Isaiah 41:10)

APPLICATION

- Finish your personal story by focusing on some good that came out of the situation you faced.
- We can better respond to changes in our family by first focusing on what's good right now.
- Finding something good can be really challenging when we're facing truly painful situations. For you, maybe knowing that God is with you is the only good you need to find right now.
- Then, think about the rest of your family and how the change is impacting them. Find something you can do to encourage or support them through this change.

LANDING

- When your family changes, God is with you.
- God also puts people in your life (like your Small Group) to help you think about, talk through, and support you when you experience change in your family.
- What is one change I'm facing or have recently faced in my family?

THINK ABOUT THIS

Change is inevitable for every family. Remember that if your students haven't experienced or recognized a major change in their home yet, they will soon. Encourage them with the truth that not all change has to be bad. And keep in mind that in this phase, every change will feel like a big deal. Though it may seem small to you, even the slightest changes in their home can feel as if their entire world has shifted. Be quick to encourage your students to keep the right perspective when faced with change, but be careful not to downplay or dismiss the changes they're experiencing that don't seem that significant compared to others.

INTERACTIVE: THROUGH THE WATER

OVERVIEW

This is where you'll use props to help bring Isaiah 43:2 to life and explain that God is with us through all of our difficult family situations.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A kiddie pool
- Water
- A large pitcher
- Flip flops
- A towel
- A tarp

HOW-TO

- On stage, place a kiddie pool on top of a tarp.
 - Fill the pitcher with water and the pool halfway up with water.
 - Have a towel and pitcher within reach of the kiddie pool.
 - Before your talk, put on flip flops and prepare to get your feet wet!
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TEACHING SCRIPT

FAM / Week 3

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

BOTTOM LINE

WHEN YOUR FAMILY CHANGES, GOD IS WITH YOU.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

We're in the middle of a series called *Fam*, and it's about . . . you guessed it, family! Because no matter what our families look like or who they're made up of, each of us has a fam. And each one of us will experience different things within that fam. Some of those experiences may be awesome, some may be crazy, some may be hilarious, and some may be really difficult.

This week, we're talking about the one thing every family has in common. The one thing each and every one of our families will experience in one way or another: **change**.

Now if you're anything like me, your heart might start racing as soon as you hear that word, "change." Because even if the change is good, I still don't like dealing with it. No matter how you look at it, change can be difficult to deal with!

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .

- Talk about a time when you experienced a change in your family (preferably when you were in middle school). Maybe a divorce, a move, a sibling leaving for college, a parent losing a job, etc.
 - Focus on the fact that this change was unwanted, unexpected, and out of your control. Be sure to share some of the feelings you experienced during this particular change.
 - Don't resolve or wrap up the story just yet. You'll come back to it at the end of your talk.
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TENSION

3 MINUTES

Change of any kind can be hard, right? In some ways, though, we know it's a part of life. We know that our classes will change next semester. Or that the rules our parents have for us will change as we grow up. Or that our favorite TV show will change as soon as the latest hit on Netflix comes out.

Those kinds of changes aren't so bad, right? We see them coming. And in a way, we expect them. But change in our family? The one thing that is supposed to be constant in our lives? The one thing that we're told we can count on? *That* kind of change is the worst! But the truth is, it's a change we're all going to experience at some point in our lives. Because **in big and small ways, in good and bad, our families change.**

Maybe **you gained a new person in your family.** Maybe it was a step-sibling, a new baby, or a foster sibling. Or maybe one of your parents got remarried, and you suddenly had another adult in your life—a new parent. No matter who it was, that new person in your home definitely changed things for your fam.

Or maybe **someone in your family got sick.** Suddenly life in your family became all about their health, their appointments, what they needed, and what you could do to help them. Your family was focused on and worried about them. And even though you understood why, it was still a change you had to figure out.

Maybe **you have an older sibling who left the house.** They went off to college, or got married, or decided to move in with your mom while you stayed with your dad. Just like that, things in your family were different because they aren't a part of your everyday life anymore.

Or maybe your family changed because **circumstances changed.** Your dad had to get a new job, or you had to move to a new house, or your mom started traveling more for work. And those things made you feel like so much about your family was changing.

Maybe it was **a change that was really painful.** One that you still don't understand. Maybe your parents got divorced, or your dad left, or your mom lost custody, or you got taken out of your home and away from your parents completely. Maybe you've been in and out of foster homes these past few years. Maybe one of your parents passed away unexpectedly. And all of the sudden, things weren't the same. Your family looks nothing like it used to, and you know it never will again. You didn't ask for that change, and you'd do just about anything to have things go back to the way they were in your fam.

No matter the changes you're facing in your fam, my point is this: It's not easy, and it doesn't usually feel good. Even if it's a *good* change—like your new house is cooler, or your baby sister is amazing, or your dad moved back to town—it still feels like change. You still have to deal with it. You still have to get used to it. And that's not always easy to do!

So, what do we do? If change is an unavoidable part of life with our fam, what do we do? What can we hold on to when everything around us suddenly feels different? **How do we handle it when our family changes?**

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

The good news is that we have the Bible to give us some amazing support and advice on how to get through challenging or difficult changes. If you're experiencing change in your family right

now or have experienced it in the past, then I want you to remember these important truths: **God is with you. God loves you. God is unchanging.** And God will give you the strength you need to get through any changes you may face in your family.

Does that make the change you're going through easy? No! Does it make it enjoyable or something to look forward to? Not necessarily! But what I think it does is give us hope and comfort that God is with us. And that is the one thing I know will never change.

God knows the changes that we're experiencing. He knows how it impacts our families and how it makes us feel. And because of that, He gives us this promise to hold onto as we face change in our lives:

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).

Okay, so that might seem dramatic at first glance. Passing through rushing waters and rivers? Walking through fire? I mean, I don't know about you, but I'd be terrified in those situations. While that may not *actually* be what's happening to us when we experience hard times or struggles, it certainly gives us a similar feeling, doesn't it? I think that's why the writer of this Scripture used these examples to explain one really important thing that we can hold onto: **God is with us.**

INTERACTIVE: Through the Water

This is where you'll use a kiddie pool, water, and a towel to help bring Isaiah 43:2 to life and explain that God is with us through all of our difficult family situations.

Sometimes we feel like we're wading through the water when it comes to our families. *[Step into the kiddie pool filled with water.]* Like we're ankle deep in problems and challenging situations. And we're wondering where God is in all of it.

And then, sometimes, things get really tough. It feels like water is rising around us, and we have nowhere to go. *[Pour water from the pitcher into the kiddie pool.]* And again, we wonder where God is in all of it. Because we could really use His help. Is He looking down on us? Does He even see us? Does He care? The water is rising, and we need someone to give us a hand!

Then the waves start to crash over us. *[Stomp in the water to create waves.]* We're drowning in the changes we're going through in our family. We see no way out; we feel totally helpless and completely scared. We need help! Now! Where's God?

Here's the thing: God was with us all along. *[Hold up the towel, step out of the kiddie pool, and put the towel around you.]* No matter what we're going through in our families, no matter how bad it may feel and how scary it seems, God is always with us. He never leaves. He's there offering comfort, support, and love through it all. *[Motion to the towel you're wearing.]*

This Scripture shows us that you don't have to do this alone. **When your family changes, God is with you.** *[Motion to the towel.]* This is His promise to us. And it's a promise that never changes. Even when the changes in your family feel as overwhelming as the things this verse talks about. Even when it feels like the river is going to drown you *[motion to the kiddie pool]*, or the fire will overtake you, you can remember that God is with you.

Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that our situation will miraculously get better, or that we'll instantly feel super courageous through our family changes. It doesn't mean that we'll suddenly be out of the water and have no problems at all. *[Motion to the kiddie pool.]* But it does mean we don't have to face change—for better or for worse—alone.

Let's look at another passage in the book of Isaiah to show you what I mean:

Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you (Isaiah 41:10 MSG).

Because of God, we don't have to face change with fear. Sure, we may panic, or be afraid, or even feel overwhelmed by the change we're facing, but in all that, God is with us.

And not just that, He'll give us the strength we need to get through it. He'll give us courage to go on. He'll help us, comfort us, and love us. And He keeps the ground steady for us when it starts to shake. He's with us and holds us in His hands. His love, comfort, and strength never fail. That is something we can count on because it's something that will never change.

I don't know about you, but I find that really reassuring. When everything around us changes, we have access to a God that never changes and will never leave us. You don't have to feel alone. You don't have to be afraid.

Because **when your family changes, God is with you.**

APPLICATION

4 MINUTES

So, here's the question: What can we do to better respond to the changes in our family?

First, **focus on what's good right now.** Look for the good in your season right now.

FINISH YOUR PERSONAL STORY

- Wrap up the personal story that you started in the Introduction.
- Here, focus on some of the good you saw come from that change, both as it happened back then and looking back today.
- Do your best not to tie everything in a perfect bow. Instead, try to address that even though the change was challenging for you, you have found good in it, even if it only brought you closer to God.

Looking back, I can see how God used that change to bring some good into my life. And I believe the same can be true for whatever change you're facing in your fam now. So, start by trying to find the good. Maybe a new sibling in your family is bringing your family closer together. Maybe a move to a new city is a chance for your dad to start a new job that will help your family financially. Maybe having an older brother facing an illness will help you appreciate him in your life more. Whatever change you're facing, try to find the good.

Now I recognize that for some of you, this may be hard to do, especially if the change you're dealing with is really difficult. You might feel like it's impossible to find even a tiny amount of good in your family situation. That's completely understandable; in fact, I think it's normal to feel that way about a truly painful change. So maybe for you, the good is simply to know that God is with you. That might be enough for you right now. Start there. Ask God to help you remember that He is always with you.

And then, **think about the rest of your family.** A change in your fam doesn't just impact you; it impacts the rest of the people in your family, too. Try to think about them. How do the other people in your family feel about this change? What are they experiencing or feeling because of it? And what is something you might be able to do to encourage someone else in your family as you face this change? Often an unexpected act of kindness, an encouraging note, spending time with them, or even reminding them of the truth that God is with them can not only help them, it can help you as you deal with change together.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **when your family changes, God is with you.** And God puts people in your life to help you through those changes, too. That's why each of you have a Small Group with people who love you and want to support you. It's a safe place for you to think about, talk through, and get help when you're experiencing change in your family.

Now as you head to your Group, I want you to think about this: **What is one change I'm facing or have recently faced in my family?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
