^[1]Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Leader Guide

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- <u>Read:</u> Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21
- <u>In This Passage:</u> While Jesus is talking to a crowd, someone lets him know that his mother and brothers are waiting for him. Jesus says that everyone can be his brother or sister because Jesus wants us in his family.
- <u>Bible Point:</u> Jesus wants us in his family.
- <u>Summary Verse:</u> "Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!" (Matthew 12:50).

Dig Deeper

- <u>You'll Be Teaching</u>: *Jesus wants us in his family*. The kids in your class come from diverse family types. You'll have kids with divorced parents, kids with nuclear families, kids who are an only child, children from big families, and maybe some kids with families that don't support them very well. Regardless of kids' family experiences, they need to know that they're welcome to join a wonderful family—Jesus' family!
- <u>Think About:</u> What's your family like? What do you like about being in Jesus' family?

Dig In to Prayer

• Pray for kids in your group who have difficult family situations. Ask God to help them feel welcomed into Jesus' family.

Quick Tip

• Show kids what Jesus' family is like by being available to the kids in your class, both during the lesson and at other times as well. Arrive a little early and linger a little after, just in case a child needs to talk.

This Lesson at a Glance



Kids answer questions about their families.

Supplies

Bible

PRAYER

Kids rest on chairs and tell our Abba Father they'll depend on him.

Supplies

- quiet worship music •
- music player

JESUS CONNECTION

Kids play a version of Red Rover.

SCRIPTURE SKILLS

Kids imitate animals and gather into groups.

Supplies

- **Bibles**
- "Hands-On Bible: Books of the Bible Poster Set" (purchase here)

BIBLE MEMORY

Kids play "Father, May I?" as they learn about God's will.

Supplies

"Life of Jesus Bible Verse Posters" (optional) (purchase here) •

Easy Prep

Tape the Matthew 12:50 poster on a wall so kids will be able to see it. If you don't have the posters, you'll need to write the verse in big letters

ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT

Older kids fill in a puzzle with family members; younger kids color a picture of the Bible story.

Supplies

- "Jesus Describes His True Family" Activity Page (1 per reader) (download here)
- "Jesus Describes His True Family" Coloring Page (1 per non-reader) (download here)
- pencils
- crayons
- three-hole punch and binders (optional)

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Kids answer questions as quickly as possible.

*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



BIBLE MESSAGE

Jesus Describes His True Family (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21)

[10 min]

Supplies

Bible

<u>Tip</u>

• Be mindful that some kids may have difficult family situations, such as being bounced around in foster care or going through their parents' divorce. Be sensitive to kids in tough family situations.

Discuss

Say: Today we'll learn that <u>Jesus wants us in his family</u>. Let's talk about families.

Ask: • What's one way you'd describe your family? Give your own description first. Have kids turn to a partner to share. Then ask a few kids to share with everyone. Make sure not to put kids on the spot, as some kids may have not-so-positive answers that they don't want to share.

Say: We all have different families. Some are big, and some are small. Some live close together, and some live far apart. But here's one thing we have in common: We can all be in Jesus' family! <u>Jesus wants us in his family</u>. Let's explore that some more.

Pop Up

Say: Before we read what Jesus said, I'd like to know more about your families. So here's what we'll do. Lead everyone in crouching.

When I say something, if that's true for you, pop up! Then squat back down and wait to hear what I say next.

Read the following list, allowing time for kids to pop up.

- Stand up if you have at least one brother.
- Stand up if you're the oldest sibling.
- Stand up if you have cousins.
- Stand up if your family has a dog.
- Stand up if you live with just one adult.
- Stand up if you live with two adults.
- Stand up if you live with a cat.
- Stand up if you have at least one sister.
- Stand up if you're the youngest sibling.
- Stand up if you have siblings who are adults.
- Stand up if you have siblings who are babies or toddlers.
- Stand up if your grandparents live with you.
- Stand up if you don't live in the same home you lived in as a baby.

Open your Bible to Matthew 12, and show kids the words. Say: **Let's see what Jesus said about his family.** Read Matthew 12:46-47.

Say: So we know some things Jesus would pop up for! He'd pop up because he had a mom. Have kids squat, then pop up. Jesus was also the oldest sibling. Have kids squat, then pop up. And Jesus had brothers! Have kids squat, then pop up.

And we also know that Jesus' family wanted to talk to him.

Ask: • How would most people respond to someone saying their family wanted to talk with them?

Say: Most people might go talk to their family or send a message that they'd talk to them later. Not Jesus! Jesus used this situation to make a point! Read Matthew 12:48-50.

Say: Jesus wants us in his family. He said that anyone who does what God wants is his brother, sister, or mother.

So let's do this: Squat back down again. Pause. Stand up if Jesus invites you to be his brother or sister. Pause, then have kids squat back down. Stand up if Jesus wants you in his family. Pause.

We can all pop up because <u>Jesus wants us in his family</u>. No matter what our families on earth are like, we can all join Jesus' family when we believe in and follow him.



PRAYER Prayer of Dependence on God

[5 min]

Supplies

- quiet worship music
- music player

<u>Tip</u>

• Find reflective worship music and other great DIG IN resources here.

Sit on a Chair and Pray

Say: I'm so glad that Jesus wants us in his family.

You see, God is our Abba Father. The word *Abba* means "Father" in the Aramaic language. That's the language Jesus spoke when he lived on earth! Jesus called God "Abba" or Father.

Jesus made a way for us to call God "Abba," too. When he died on the cross and came back to life again, Jesus welcomed all people who believe in him into God's family.

God is an Abba Father we can always depend on. God supports us, so we can rest in his loving care. Like a chair supports us and gives us a solid place to rest, our Abba Father God supports us, too. No matter what we're going through, we can rest and rely on him. Let's rest with God now and tell God we depend on him.

Have kids sit comfortably on a chair or the floor. Play quiet worship music for a minute or so as kids simply sit on the chair, rest, and think about God.

Say: When we were little and needed a hug or wanted to be held, we'd raise our arms to a grown-up. Now as we sit and rest with God, let's raise our arms to our Abba Father to show we need him, too. Have kids extend arms as you pray.

Pray: Abba Father, thank you for inviting us to be a part of your family. May we depend on you today and find rest, knowing that you love us, and that <u>Jesus wants us in his family</u>. In Jesus' name, amen.



JESUS CONNECTION Welcome!

[10 min]

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Tip

If you want kids to call each other by name, you may want to have them quickly write their names down on slips of paper. Groups will exchange papers and put the other group's names into a bowl that they can draw from.

Welcome Friends

Say: Jesus said that anyone who loves and obeys God is part of his family. We're all welcomed into God's family! Let's see what a good job you can do at welcoming people in.

- Have kids line up and count off so each person has a unique number.
- Send the first half of the kids to one side of the room to line up. Send the rest of the kids to the opposite side of the room to line up, facing the first group.
- Tell each group the range of numbers they can choose from. For example, Group 1 might have numbers 1-10 while Group 2 has numbers 11-20.
- Group 1 will huddle together and choose a number from Group 2's side and a fun way to welcome someone, such as fist bumps, pats on the back, elbow bumps, or low-fives.
- Lead Group 1 in this chant:

Give a cheer! Give a cheer! Send number [number] over here!

- The child in Group 2 with that number will raise hands and say his or her name.
- Group 1 will call, "Welcome, [name]!" Then that child will run over to be welcomed in the fun way Group 1 decided.
- Then have Group 2 take a turn! •
- Help kids keep track of which numbers they've called. When groups have • completely switched sides, have each group sit in a circle.

Talk About Jesus

- Ask: What happened to our groups?
- What made it hard to remember who was in your first group?
- How did it feel to be welcomed into a group?

Say: God's family is filled with lots of different people, but they all have one thing in common. They love and follow God. Jesus wants us in his family. He willingly gave up his life so *vou* could be in that family forever! The Bible tells us that when people join God's family, heaven rejoices! It's like a welcome party just for each of us!



SCRIPTURE SKILLS Gather the Family

[10 min]

Supplies

- Bibles
- "Hands-On Bible: Books of the Bible Poster Set" (purchase here)

<u>Tips</u>

- It may take a while for kids to find the Bible verse. That's okay! This activity is primarily about building Bible navigation skills.
- If you have a lot of non-readers, have some picture Bibles on hand for them to flip through as older kids look up verses. They won't look for anything specific, but they can look at the pictures to practice paging through Bibles.

Explore Ephesians 1:5

Say: Jesus told his friends that everyone who wants to follow God can be part of his family. Jesus wants us in his family. Let's see what the Bible says about God's family.

Make sure kids all have Bibles. Younger kids can sit with older kids so they can observe the skills of using their Bibles even before being able to read.

Say: Our Bible verse is in the book of Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 5. Let's find the book of Ephesians. That's in the New Testament—which is the later part of the Bible. Open your Bible kind of near the back. Allow time.

- Point to the book of Ephesians on the poster so kids can see the name and what books come before and after it.
- Mention that the chapter numbers are the big numbers, and help kids find the big 1 or the beginning of Ephesians.
- Mention that the verse numbers are the small numbers, and help kids find the small 5 in Ephesians 1.
- When everyone has found the verse, ask someone to read Ephesians 1:5 aloud.

Say: Jesus wants us in his family. He was excited to come to earth so we could all be adopted into God's family.

Gather the Family

Say: There are all different kinds of families. Let's play a game and form a family. Our first family will include everyone who has blue on their shirt.

- Have all the kids wearing blue link arms to form a family.
- Everyone else will scatter around the room.
- The "blue" family will then go around "adopting" other kids by inviting them to link arms.
- Have everyone spread out again and create a new family with a different criterion, such as all the girls, all kids of a certain age, or all the people with glasses.

Ask: • What do you know about being adopted?

- How was this game kind of like adoption? How was it different?
- What does it mean that God adopts us?

Say: We formed families based on things we had in common. But then we adopted more people into our families! That's like God's family. God's family requires everyone to be perfect. But that would mean none of us could join! And Jesus wants us in his family.

So Jesus died to forgive our sins. Even though we're still not perfect, when God sees us, he cleans all our sins so that we look perfect. And then he can adopt us into his family to be brothers and sisters of Jesus!



BIBLE MEMORY The Will of My Father

[10 min]

Supplies

• "Life of Jesus Bible Verse Posters" (optional) (purchase here)

Easy Prep

• Tape the Matthew 12:50 poster on a wall so kids will be able to see it. If you don't have the posters, you'll need to write the verse in big letters.

Play "Father, May I?"

Say: Jesus wants us in his family. Let's learn a Bible verse from today's Bible story. The Bible may seem like a big book for grown-ups, but it's for anyone who wants to know more about God and his love.

In Matthew 12:50 Jesus said, "Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!"

In today's Bible story, Jesus' mother and brothers asked permission to speak with Jesus. Jesus replied with this verse. He wanted people to know that God's family is bigger than people who are related to each other. God's family is for anyone who does what God the Father says.

Let's play a game to help us learn this verse.

- Choose one person to be "Father." Have the Father stand near one wall while everyone else stands in a line on the opposite side of the room.
- Going down the line, have kids take turns asking Father permission for the whole group to move forward together. For example, kids may ask, "Father, may we take two hops forward?" or "Father, may we tiptoe forward for five seconds?"
- Father replies with "Yes, you may" or "No, you may not."
- Have everyone say the verse together after Father says "Yes, you may," referring to the poster as needed.
- Play for several minutes or until all kids reach Father. Then choose a new Father and play as long as time allows.

Talk About It

Say: In our game, we obeyed whatever Father wanted.

Ask: • What's something our Father God wants his children to do?

• Sometimes the Father in our game said no. What are things Father God says *not* to do?

Say: Jesus wants us in his family. Since we're God's children, God invites us to do so many things, including learning his words in the Bible! We learn God's words so we can obey God and do what he wills—or wants—us to do.



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT All in the Family

[10 min]

09/21/2025

Supplies

- "Jesus Describes His True Family" Activity Page (1 per reader) (download here)
- "Jesus Describes His True Family" Coloring Page (1 per non-reader) (download <u>here</u>)
- pencils
- crayons
- three-hole punch and binders (optional)

<u>Tip</u>

• **WARNING!** Don't just print and distribute! <u>Here's why</u>.

Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: Jesus wants us in his family. He said that anyone who follows his Father is in his family! Let's see if there's room for every family member in this puzzle.

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will fill in the puzzles.

Ask: • Tell about your family. What are they like? Who's in your family? Say: Some families are formed just based on who is related to each other. Other families are formed when people foster or adopt children. When people adopt, anyone can join a family! That's how Jesus' family is. <u>Jesus</u> <u>wants us in his family</u>. He made it possible for God to adopt us all! There's room for all of us in God's family!

ANSWER KEY:

Classroom: Wee Worship





Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: Jesus said anyone who follows God is in his family. Jesus wants us in his family! Let's color Jesus inviting people into his family.

Allow time for kids to color.

When kids finish coloring, three-hole-punch their pages and put them into binders, if desired.



Answer Questions

Say: We know what Jesus wants: Jesus wants us in his family. He told us that when he said that anyone who follows God is his brother, sister, and mother.

Let's see what you want.

- Shout out a question from the list below, and have kids answer with their preferences, finishing with your own.
- Spice it up by making it a speed challenge: Have kids answer as fast as they can. If you're in a large group, it'll be hard to hear, so rapidly point to different kids, having them answer when you point to them. Alternatively, form smaller groups so everyone can answer quickly within their group.
- Here are some questions to use:
 - What type of pet do you want?
 - What ice cream flavor do you want?
 - What topping do you want on that ice cream?
 - What kind of car or truck do you want?
 - What place do you want to visit?
 - What do you want to watch?
 - What book do you want to read?
 - What season of the year do you want it to be?
 - Where do you want to play?
 - What activity do you want to do at school?
 - What color do you want to paint your room?
 - What present do you want to receive?
 - What topping do you want on your pizza?
 - What time of day do you want it to be?
 - What do you want for a snack?
- Let the game keep going as long as needed to fill time until parents begin to arrive.