



The Family of God:

A Lesson about Foster Care and Adoption

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The purpose of this lesson is to teach children about what it means to be a part of the family of God, specifically in relation to foster care and adoption. Children will learn what foster care and adoption means and how the church should respond. Each section can be adapted for different age ranges.

Warm-Up! (5 minutes)

What you'll need: paper slips (index cards/sticky notes work as well), pen or marker

Beforehand, prepare sets of paper slips. On each slip, draw/write an animal such as monkey or zebra. You'll hand these out and challenge kids to form groups with children who have the same animal. Aim for having animal groups of three to four kids, but feel free to add or take away according to your size group. As an added twist, you'll need to create two or three animal groups that have no match. Kids who get these singled out animals will be welcomed into another group soon!



Say: **We've got a special activity today, but first we have to get into groups, we'll call them families. I'm going to hand you a sheet of paper with an animal on it. Secretly look at which animal you have**

and then try to find your family; they'll have the same animal as you. But here's the catch! You can't speak or make any noises. Can you act like your animal and find your families? Distribute the sheets of paper and on your signal have kids start to find their groups. After a minute, call time and see how the children did.

Great job working together to find each other families! God loves families...He made them to work together and give him glory. Why are families important? Allow time.

Families are awesome because they love each other. Parents can protect and guide the kids, and the kids can help the family in different ways as well! But it looks like we have a few kids without families to join...what can we do? Allow time. If no one suggests it, ask if some families would be willing to take in these extra kids.

Now everyone has a family! Today, we're going to be talking about kids just like you who are waiting on a family through foster care and/or adoption. Some of you might have experience with foster care or know someone who has. What do you think of when we talk about foster care and adoption?

Allow time for kids to share their thoughts. Explain that children in foster care have not done anything wrong, but because of things that have happened in their families, they aren't able to live with their parents at this time. Children in foster care are just like the children in this Sunday School class. They have foster moms and foster dads. They go to school, play on sports teams, and have brothers and sisters. Here and throughout the lesson, be mindful of the language used and the situations your kids are in. Some of them may have personally seen foster care at work in their lives, and may or may not want to share. Remember to be respectful of each's child story and not to ask if anyone specifically has had experience with foster care. Proceed with good judgment.

Bible Experience (about 15 minutes)

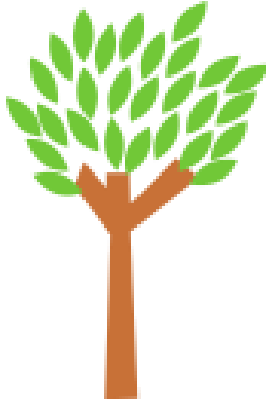


What you'll need: paper strips (cutting a piece of paper long ways will net you about three strips), scissors, colored pencils (markers/crayons may work as well), tape, Bible. See further instructions and outline at the end of this packet for assistance in creating paper chain.

Say: **Let's make paper chain families by working together as family units!** Distribute the paper strips, scissors, and colored pencils. If kids aren't familiar with making chain dolls, help them fold the paper accordion style as even as possible. Explain that you start by drawing an outline of a person with hands and feet touching the edges of the small section. When you cut it out, you'll have a chain of people holding hands ready for faces and some cool clothes!

See if your family can work together to make these paper chains. Will your family take turns? Or you may want to give each family member a different task, such as cutting, tracing, and coloring. Give kids

around 5 minutes, with a one-minute warning as families are finishing up. If groups finish early, have them go around and tell what they're favorite family traditions are. During this time, make your own paper doll chain.



When finished say: **God loves us very much and designed families to take care of each other. Hold up your families so I can see them!** Pause and complement the groups' work.

Today, I want to talk about a sad story that has a happy ending. Let's start all the way back at the beginning. If time allows, consider having the kids look up the following verses and read them out loud.

The Bible (hold up Bible) tells us that God created everything and as such he deserves all the glory and honor and power (Revelation 4:11). What are some of your favorite things God created?

God made us too! The first people God made were Adam and Eve. Fold up your paper chain so only three people are seen. **Here is God, and His creations, Adam and Eve. God and His people were together and it was so good! But Adam and Eve choose to disobey God. That's called sin.** Using colored pencils or the bottom of your shoes, dirty up one side of the paper doll chain, leaving the first figure clean. **Can anyone give me some examples of sin?** Pause. **Adam and Eve would go on to have kids and they would have kids.** Unfold the rest of your paper chains. **But the Bible says that we've all sinned (Romans 3:23).** Have kids dirty up one complete side of their paper chains as you dirty up the rest of your chain. **The punishment for sin is death and separation from God.** Take scissors and cut the paper doll chain so that Adam and Eve and the rest are separated from the first doll.

Well that's incredibly sad. There's nothing we can do to help ourselves. We can't be good enough to earn forgiveness. But there's good news! God has an answer to our sin problem! God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our punishment (Romans 2:8-9).

Jesus never sinned, yet He died on the cross for our sins. What do you think about what Jesus did? Pause. **But He came back! And because Jesus took our punishment, we can be welcomed into God's family forever (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18).**

When God opens our hearts, we believe that Jesus alone saves us. We turn from sin and tell others about our faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10, 13). In a way, it's like we're adopted into the family of God. Turn your paper doll chain around to the clean side and use tape to attach it back to the God figure.

One day sin will be no more and everything will be perfect. But until then, sin has really messed up our world! God designed families to be together and love each other. Because of our imperfect world, sometimes kids are separated from their families. It might be



due to death (cut off one of your people from your paper chain) **or it might be because a child's birth parents can't take care of their child** (cut off one of your people from your paper chain). **What do you think it would be like for a child doesn't have birth parents or other family member to take care of them** (cut off one of your people from your paper chain)?

We have kids who need families! Read James 1:27. **What can we do?**

Allow kids to answer. If a child suggest taking in the children, allow them to take a child that has been separated and tape it to their family's chain.

Jesus loves everyone. Why do you think the Bible tells us to watch after orphans? How is what we did like or unlike what Jesus did for us?

God has a plan to deal with the problems sin causes. God calls us to love those who have been separated from their families. He sends us help when we were separated from Him!

Foster care allows families to take care of a child and love them like are their own. They hope and pray that the child can be reunited with their birth family if possible, but will take care of the child and love the child no matter what. Adoption is like what Jesus did for us. Adoption means asking a child to join your family officially, forever and ever! Kids in either of these situations didn't do anything to deserve it, and so it's not right to make fun of and treat them differently. God loves them just as much!

Have kids come together and tape their family chains to each other creating one big circle chain.

Live It Out! (about 5 minutes)

What you'll need: circle paper doll chain from earlier, paper labels: "love", "food", "safety", "faith"



Say: **In the United States, over 500,000 children are in foster care.** Give an appropriate example of how many that is for kids...such as "They could fill our church sanctuary 100 times over." **Every child needs the love of a family. God wants His followers to meet the needs of orphans! Let's see what that's like...**

Assign each wall in your room one of labels you prepared earlier. **Let's pretend these paper dolls are kids waiting in foster care. We need to take care of them. They need to travel around the room and get all four of these things! It not only takes willing families working together to help these kids, but also churches working together to help out local and international kids! Can we work together to help these kids out?**

Have your kids form a circle and hold hands, placing the ring of paper dolls around one set of held hands. Challenge your kids to help get the paper doll chain from one part of the room to the other by

passing them around the circle. Because their hands are held, they'll have to pass the ring over their head and step through it. Encourage them to work together to get the kids around to all four zones (once around the circle). If time allows, play again, challenging kids to beat their previous time.

ASK: What made working together in this game easy or hard?

Why is it important for us to work together to help these kids in need?

You may not be able to adopt, but what are some things you can do to help these kids?

See our ring of kids? This reminds me of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries logo (consider showing kids the logo if available). They work with churches in our area to help families and children in need. They even have a ministry called Connect 1:27 that helps with foster care and adoption services. Remember James 1:27? That's where they got their name!

One thing they always ask for is prayer for the over 4,000 children in foster care in our state.

Let's end with prayer today.

Invite kids to silently pray, giving God thanks for their families, being invited to come into God's family, and for the kids. Pray also for the LBCH and the kids in their system. If you have older kids, consider asking them to write down their prayers on the paper dolls.

Hang the paper doll chain in your room to remind your kids to keep praying and the joys of being adopted into God's family.

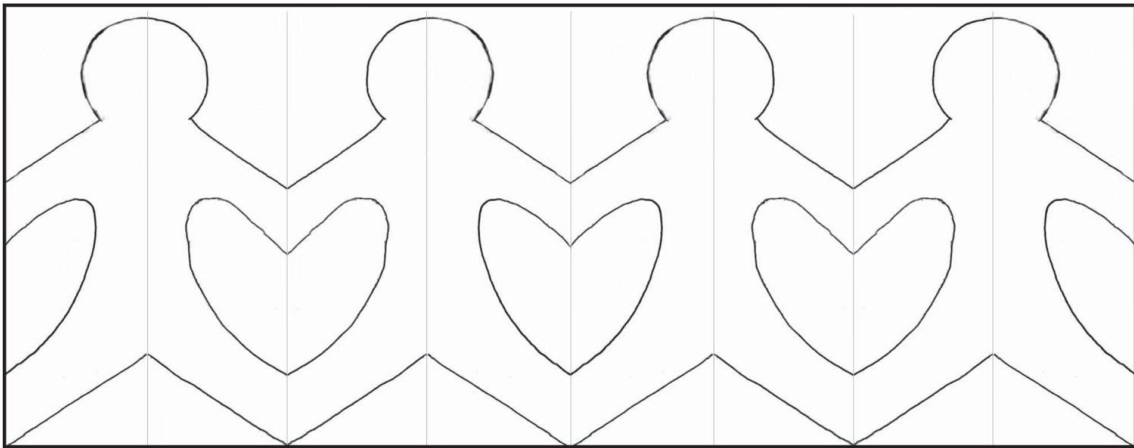
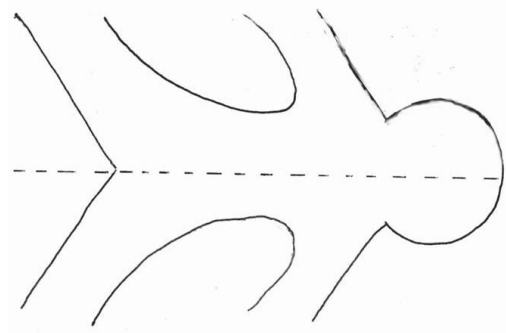


Adaptions from: <http://www.gqkidz.org/>;
<http://centrikid.com/files/2013/01/Gospel-Gods-Plan-for-Me-Poster-5.5mb.pdf>

Paper Doll Chain

*Fold the Paper and cut out the figures
Now open it up and see all the neighbors!*

1. Cut out the box below along the heavy black lines.
2. Fold the paper on the faint gray lines.
3. Now cut out the figure.
4. See all the neighbors!
5. Do you notice what holds the neighbors together?
6. If you wish, copy the pattern at the right onto another piece of paper to make another chain. These can be taped together if you wish.



Instructions from: http://www.toocraft.com/postpic/2009/07/paper-doll-chain-template_254800.png