**Topic: God’s Family**

**Bible Passage: Ephesians 1:4-14**

**Activity: Family Portrait**

Supplies: paper plates (1 for each preteen), crayons or markers

Do you remember being in Kindergarten and the teacher would ask you to draw a picture of your family? First, you would draw your house and the sun shining down on it. Then, you’d draw the car and flowers outside the house. Last, you would draw your family. It was so cool to draw your parents, your siblings, your pets, and, of course, yourself. They were just stick figures, but they were still cool!

Today, we’re going to start the lesson by drawing some portraits of our family, kind of like we did in Kindergarten. Each of you has a paper plate and your small group has some crayons or markers. Draw a portrait of your family and then share your drawing with the others in your group.

*Give each small group time to complete their drawings and share them with others. To make sure your group participates in this activity, give prizes to the “most creative” or “best” drawings.*

**After the activity, say:** Great job! It is very interesting to see how different our families are from one another. No matter what our families look like, they are a special part of our lives. They help us in times of need. They give us love and acceptance no matter what. It’s great being a part of a family.

We all have something inside of us that makes us want to be a part of a loving family. God put that piece inside us. He wanted us to have the need so that we would desire to be a part of His family. And God, because He loves us so much, is willing to adopt us into His family. Imagine the excitement and joy that comes from being adopted into God’s family! Let’s read about that that adoption from out Bibles.

*Read Ephesians 4:1-14*

That’s a really big verse with a lot of hard parts. Let’s break it down into three parts so that we can understand how God adopts us into his family.

The first part of that passage says, **“He chose us…to be adopted…”** (vs. 4-6). God knew that we were in a desperate situation because of sin. He knew that we were separated from Him because of sin. Even when we were sinners, He loved us so much that he sent Jesus to die for our sins. Through Jesus Christ, we can be adopted into God’s family. This means that we are no longer separated from God, but that we have a “home” with God. That’s the first thing that we get through God’s adoption: a home.

The second part of the passage talks about the **“grace that He lavished on us…”** (vs. 7-8) Being adopted into God’s family means that we are loved by God no matter what. As His children, we are loved, protected, provided for, and more! God never stops loving us and blessing us. Why? Because we’re a part of His family!

The last part of the passage we read says that we **“were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”** (vs. 13b-14) When someone is adopted, they legally get to change their last name to match their new family. When we are adopted into God’s family, we are given His family name. When others see us, they see that we belong to God and His family.

So, this verse describes three things that we receive when we are adopted into God’s family. First, we are given a home—a place to stay and be safe. Second, we are given love and attention from God the Father. Third, we are given His name and a new identity in Christ.

There’s one last thing that is important part of every adoption. Just like the kids in the movie clip, they had to accept the new family. They could’ve say, “No, we’re not coming to live with you.” They had to make a choice. God wants to adopt us into His family, but we have to make a choice to accept His invitation. It is up to us to say, “Yes, I want to be a part of your family.”

*If your group time allows, take a moment to share the Gospel with the group. Be clear and explain “churchy” words for those that might not understand them. Try not to be pushy and allow the Holy Spirit to work in that time.*

*Pray and dismiss preteens to small groups.*

**Break into small groups and discuss the following questions:**

* How would you define *adoption*?
* Why do you think God made people with the desire to be “in a family?”
* Ephesians 1:4-14 described three things we receive when we are adopted into God’s family. Which of those three excites you the most? Why?
* If everyone wants to be a part of a loving family, how can knowing this help you share the Gospel with friends?
* Read the following verses and discuss what the say about God’s family:
* 1 John 3:1
* Galatians 4:4
* John 1:12
* Romans 8:14-17
* Psalm 68:5-6