

# Keys to Family Unity



Collegiate Quarterly

## Teacher's Guide

### Surveying the Source

Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:15–24; Matt. 16:24; Luke 12:15–21; Rom. 5:12; 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:18–22; Eph. 4:23, 24

### Plotting the Course

#### The students will:

- Understand the image of God, and how it is clearly reflected through the divinely-ordained family model.
- Reflect on God's love and its power to transform our view of family roles and service to our families and communities.

- Explore the biblical timeline of the family and the weaving of God's hand in these diverse stories.

### Preparing to Lead

While we are not able to see God face-to-face on earth, He reveals Himself to us in various other forms, one of which is through the gift of the family. God is seeking to fully reflect His image in our earthly families, just as He has in Heaven. Though we often miss seeing the

beauty of the people around us, those we are blessed to share our lives with can teach us many wonderful things about God's character. Once we are willing to accept the Lord's grander vision of unity, we can expect to experience a radical change in our relationships.

### Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, magazine cut-outs, construction paper, easel board, paper, pen/pencil

### Getting Started

**A.** Instruct your students to recall a cherished memory of spending quality time with a family member. Have them write down positive words they associate with the event on the left side of the page. On the right side, have them write down words that come to mind when they think about a time of conflict in their family.

*Ask:* "What events led up to the conflict? What could have been done differently?"

*Discuss* these verses: Exod. 20:12; Prov. 22:6; 1 Cor. 13:1–13; 1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 5:21; 6:1–4; 1 Tim. 3:4. *Ask:* "What do these passages teach about how to maintain peace and unity in our homes? What does this say about God's image and His desire for our relationships?"

**B.** Present a few pictures of some famous families to the class. Ask if they recognize the families featured in the pictures. As a group, highlight some key facts about the families featured (you will need to do some preliminary research about the families you choose). Allow time for discussion about your chosen families, the roles within each family, and the evolution of the family overall. Now, have the class compare families from previous generations to that of today. What has changed about the family model overtime? What has remained the same? Discuss how the family of the world might contrast to one where God is at the head.

## Delving Into the Word

**A.** Though God’s model for the family has not changed, the prevalence of sin has led to the outbreak of chaos and division in our world. Alcoholism, assault, abuse, mental, disturbances, separation and divorce have all infiltrated our home lives. Instead of the perfect family portrait, we find shattered pieces and hate where love should be. In the midst of all of this brokenness, pain abounds as countless families suffer for it. Despite all of this, God still has a lofty vision for the family on earth, which is visibly delineated in His story. Review these passages together with the group (Lev. 19:17, 18; Deut. 6:5–9; Ps. 133:1; Prov. 3:5; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:31–34; Hos. 2:16–23; John 17:21; 1 Cor. 13:1–3; Eph. 5:25–27; 6:1, 4; Col. 3:15; 1 John 4:7; ), and have students share their thoughts about what they understand to be God’s ultimate vision for the family model. Have the class reflect on the knowledge of God’s redemptive plan for all families on earth.

**B.** Compare John 17:21 and Mark 10:8—note the use of the word “one.” Have the class discuss the concept of unity and why they think this word is so significant to their understanding of what unity means. Distribute the Reproducible Activity and have students independently list some attributes of what they think a unified church should look like. Then, have them complete the Reproducible Activity, using their own family members. Under each family role, have them insert one of the attributes they previously wrote down (e.g. “Warm” under “Mother”). Discuss why it is so important for the family of God to exemplify the characteristics of Christ, in order to effectively flourish as a unit. As a group, reflect on what we as a church body can do to ensure that we are fulfilling Christ’s earthly appeal in John 17, for us as His children to be as one.

## Discussing the Ideas

1. Why do you think Christ emphasized unity so frequently in His teachings?
2. How can we use our knowledge of the love of God to enhance our relationships with others?
3. What are some ways that we can apply the concept of unity in diversity?
4. What are some of the hidden barriers that often lead to unnecessary divisions and conflicts within the church?
5. When we find ourselves in the mid-

dle of a conflict, what are some Biblical strategies that we can practice in order to dissuade it appropriately?

6. How can we be more intentional about representing the image of God regularly in our home life, churches, and communities?

7. What inner conflicts might you be wrestling with today, that might be hindering the progress of your current relationships?

## Closing the Activity

The family is one of the most beautiful examples of God’s love for humanity. If we desire the utmost success for all of our earthly relationships, it is imperative that we seek the Giver for guidance. It is only by submitting to Him in all areas of our lives, that we can expect to maintain

peace with all those we are surrounded with on a daily basis. Peace in our homes translates to peace in our churches and to our communities. Let’s place our trust in the Lord so that we can be a living, breathing example of love in its most excellent form.

**Alexandra Yeboah, Brampton, Ontario, Canada**

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Below, is an example of a family tree. Create your own based on your family structure. Under each family role, insert one of the attributes you have previously identified. Be sure to include God as the foundation of your family tree.

# My Family Tree

