

Families are important

SERIES THEME: FAMILY

These collective worship outlines aim to show the pupils that the Bible affirms different types of families and provides encouragement if things go wrong.

SESSION TOPIC

The importance of family

AIM

To help pupils think about why families are important and about being members of God's family.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Proverbs 31:27; Ephesians 2:19; 6:1,4

YOU WILL NEED

List of questions about animals and their young (see box), pictures of animals with their young

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask for eight volunteers to come to the front. Divide them into two teams. Explain that you are going to have a quiz where the object is to give the special name of the young of various animals (eg a young cat is a kitten). In turn, ask the teams questions of increasing difficulty. You could use animals from the list provided (see box), or see if you can find more obscure ones. Add in some which you answer yourself with incorrect answers (eg duckbill platypus/duckbill platykitten) just for fun! Show some of the pictures of animals and their young that you have brought at appropriate moments, as the quiz goes along. Congratulate the winning team and ask all your volunteers to sit down.

Ask the pupils if they have seen birds, like ducks or swans, swimming on a lake or river with their young. Talk about birds and how they care for their young: they provide food for them; teach them to find food for themselves; teach them how to preen themselves, using oil from the gland at the base of their tail feathers to coat their feathers so that they don't sink etc. Ducklings or cygnets snuggle up to the mother bird under her wings for warmth and security. If the parent birds think there is any danger to their young they will flap their wings and make a noise to deter people or dogs from coming too close.

Talk with the pupils about ways in which these families are similar to our own (being sensitive to the variety of family units that are likely to be represented). We all need to know that we are cared about and that we belong.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Christians believe that families are part of God's plan. Families provide the security, care and support we need. In families, people can learn how to get on with others (Ephesians 6:1,4). Jesus taught his followers to call God 'Father' and Christians think of each other as brothers and sisters in a huge family that spreads all over the world (Ephesians 2:19).

For everyone

Whatever we believe about God, families are very important. We all need the safety and love

of our families to grow up in. Sadly, family relationships sometimes break down and then we might need other people to help us. Sometimes people talk about 'the family of man' (or the human family) which includes all human beings.

RESPONSE

Ask the pupils to think about their own family—focusing on good things. They may like to think about God as a Father who knows and loves and cares for them. They may like to think about their school as a family where people care for and support one another.

If appropriate, you could finish collective worship with this prayer:

'Lord God, we thank you for our families and for all the people who care for us. Please help us to care for others too. Amen.'

ANIMALS AND THEIR YOUNG

Cat (kitten)

Horse (foal)

Goose (gosling)

Dog (puppy)

Cow (calf)

Kangaroo (joey)

Duck (duckling)

Deer (fawn)

Hare (leveret)

Sheep (lamb)

Eagle (eaglet)

Lion (cub)

Swan (cygnet)



Family matters

SERIES THEME: FAMILY

These collective worship outlines aim to show the pupils that the Bible affirms different types of families and provides encouragement if things go wrong.

SESSION TOPIC

The extended family

AIM

To help pupils see that the Bible affirms the extended family.

To remind pupils about the importance of supporting each other.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Ruth 1–4

YOU WILL NEED

Flip chart and marker pens (if you use the Key Stage 1 option)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask for 20 volunteers, ten boys and ten girls. Divide them into two groups – one group of girls, one group of boys. Ask each group to stand in a circle, all facing to the right. Then they must all sit down on the knees of the person behind them. When they are all sitting down, they must wave their arms in the air. (The reason for having separate boy and girl teams is to avoid their embarrassment at having to sit on each other!) As they are trying to do this, explain to everyone else just how difficult it is to do. Congratulate your volunteers on their efforts, however well they do.

Point out that in that exercise everyone needed to rely on everyone else for it to work. It wasn't just the people nearest to you who needed you, but even the people on the other side of the circle. Often we are good at helping and caring for people near to us, but not for those we think of as further away. In the Bible there are stories about people honouring God by looking after the people who are close family members, like parents, brothers, sisters etc; but there are others about caring for people further away, like uncles, aunts, cousins and so on.

BIBLE STORY

Tell the pupils that in the Bible there are stories about Ruth and her family, who had some sad and difficult events in her life.

Tell Ruth's story:

Ruth lived with her husband and his mother who was called Naomi. Then there was a famine and Ruth's husband died of hunger. Ruth looked after Naomi, her mother-in-law, someone who was very close to her. Even when Naomi told her she could go, Ruth stayed with Naomi to care for her.

Ruth and Naomi travelled to the country where Naomi was born. There, Ruth worked in the field collecting corn for food. She went along after the farmers and collected the scraps they missed for her and Naomi to eat. Ruth worked in the field of someone called Boaz. When Naomi found out, she was pleased, because Boaz was a distant relative, someone who might help them. One day Ruth told Boaz that he was a distant relative of hers, and how poor she and Naomi were. Boaz knew that he had to look after them properly, so he married Ruth and looked after her and Naomi.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Ruth knew that she had to look after Naomi. Boaz knew he had to look after both Naomi and Ruth. The Bible says that people should care for close relatives, and those not so near. Just like the sitting game, we all need to support each other, even if the people are not close relatives.

For everyone

We all have families, whether they are big or small. We can learn to be people who care about

those close to us, and also those not so near. We can write or phone or help with shopping or cleaning, or just sit and chat. By giving our time we can show we really care.

RESPONSE

Pray, thanking God for our families. Mention some of the people listed if you do the Key Stage 1 option. Ask God to help us to become people who care for those close to us, and those not so near.

KEY STAGE 1 OPTION

Instead of the sitting game, ask the pupils how many people live in their house. Write up their answers so that everyone can see. Ask the pupils which relations live in their house (eg Mum, Dad, Grandma). Then ask which relatives live in different houses, and which live overseas. Write up the answers. You could find out who has the most people living at home, or the most relatives in more than one country.

Talk about all the different relatives and how some are very close to us, like our mums; others are not so close to us, like our aunts. They might live near, or even with us. In the Bible, we read that God thinks all our families are important, however big or small, and that each person in the family is important. Go on to tell the story of Ruth.



Breakdown

SERIES THEME: FAMILY

These collective worship outlines aim to show the pupils that the Bible affirms different types of families and provides encouragement if things go wrong.

SESSION TOPIC

Family breakdown

AIM

To help pupils consider that some things that go wrong can't be put right.

To help them understand the importance of knowing someone is with you when things are hard.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Psalm 23

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask the pupils to imagine they are on a car journey:

You break down. What do you do? Can you see what's wrong? Can you fix it yourself? If you can't, what will you do next? (Answer: phone for help on an emergency phone or your mobile.) Point out that you need to tell someone about the problem.

The breakdown service comes. What will the mechanic do? (Answer: he'll try to fix the problem.) If the problem is simple, the mechanic can fix it and you can continue your journey. If it's a big problem, so that the breakdown mechanic can't do anything, what then?

Either you can have your car towed to a garage to be mended, or you might choose to have it towed back home.

The car owner needs to think and make a decision. Do you want it fixed? Is it worth it? The passengers have to be thought about too. The breakdown and the breakdown services affect them too. Perhaps the driver will try to blame them ('I told you to put some water in...'), even though the car and driving it is the driver's responsibility.

How might the passengers be feeling? This could depend on the relationships. For example, are the passengers family members? Or friends being given a lift to the airport? Can the passengers do anything about the problem? (Answer: 'No'.)

Now make the comparison with family breakdown.

Sometimes things go wrong in families and there are arguments (eg adult/adult; adult/child; child/child). Sometimes there's a 'breakdown'. Sometimes we can fix things easily ('I'm sorry...') by saying sorry, talking about the problem and trying to put things right. Sometimes we can't. It's a big problem. Then we need help (refer back to the emergency phone call). We need to talk to someone about our problem who knows how to help us get it fixed.

The people involved in the breakdown have to make a decision. Do I want to get this fixed? Sometimes the answer is 'No' and that will mean that things are going to change.

Like the passengers in the car, everyone in the family will be affected. Like the driver, adults sometimes try to blame the children. Make the point that it is not the children's fault. It is the grown-ups' responsibility.

Point out that sometimes things go wrong for you and your family, no matter what your faith.

APPLICATION

For everyone

Read Psalm 23. Then talk about the role of the shepherd. Explain that to keep his sheep from straying, the shepherd would sometimes even break a sheep's leg. It was the shepherd's role to protect his sheep. But there is no promise in the psalm that a sheep will never get lost.

This Psalm has something to say to everyone, if they want it to. The person who composed the psalm really understood that he could trust God to be with him in the bad times, and this gave him confidence in God's love. The psalm promises that God will be with people in the bad times.

Sometimes a friend can give you the support you need to go through a difficult time. It may be that people will be able to see God's love through their friend.

Often when there's a big breakdown, we can't know how things will turn out. We just have to be patient and wait.

RESPONSE

Ask the pupils to sit quietly for a few moments. Ask them to think about people they know (it might be them) who are going through difficult times in their families. Perhaps some people will be going home after school to difficult situations which make them unhappy or afraid.

Ask the pupils to think about people who have got difficult family situations and are being helped at the moment (eg by social workers, counsellors, friends).

End with this prayer, if appropriate:

'Dear God, please help... Ask the pupils to choose someone they know. They are going through a very difficult time in their family. Please help them to be ready to accept help and to know that you are with them and want to take care of them. Amen.'

Be very sensitive to the family situations children in the assembly may be in. Remember that this assembly may raise issues that the pupils will want to talk about. If appropriate, you could talk with the head teacher about how to provide opportunities for pupils to do this.

