

# Children's Lessons for Life Groups

All-In-One lessons for kids ages 4-12

from

All-In-One Sunday School, Volumes 2 & 3

Lesson 3



# A Father's Faith

3

## LESSON AIM

To help kids understand that ★ Jesus cares about our families.

## OBJECTIVES

### Kids or families will

- ✓ hear how Jesus helped Jairus and his little girl,
- ✓ discover how family members depend on each other,
- ✓ make affirmation cards for members of their families, and
- ✓ reflect upon the need to show love and appreciation to each member of their families.

## YOU'LL NEED

- balloons
- masking tape
- large potatoes
- bowls of water
- bars of soap
- paper towels
- safety pins
- Bible-times costume (optional)
- sandwich bags
- tablespoons
- a bowl of dried cereal\*
- a bowl of M&M's\*
- a bowl of raisins\*
- Bibles
- scissors
- markers or colored pencils
- photocopies of the "From the Bottom of My Heart" handout (p. 88)
- photocopies of the "Thanks a Bunch" handout (p. 89)

\*Always check for allergies before serving snacks.

### Teacher Tip

*This lesson works well with an intergenerational class. You may wish to invite whole families to join you for this session.*



all-in-one  
SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## BIBLE BASIS

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### **Mark 5:21-24, 35-43**

Desperation drove Jairus to Jesus. Jairus' daughter lay dying and his only hope was in the healing hands of the controversial teacher from Nazareth. What a juicy tidbit of gossip Jairus must have generated when he pushed his way through a crowd and fell at Jesus' feet with half the population of Capernaum looking on! Nicodemus, another teacher, had dared to come to Jesus only by night. Would Jairus lose his position as a synagogue leader? Who would leak the word to his superiors in Jerusalem?

I have the feeling that Jairus cared nothing for the crowd's opinion or for whatever the consequences of his actions might be. Jairus had only one thing on his mind: his daughter's life. There was an almost tangible sense of relief when Jesus started toward Jairus' house. But then Jesus stopped to address a woman who had touched his cloak and been healed. Jesus turned to see who had touched him, commended her faith, and affirmed her healing. There stood Jairus, thinking, "We've got to hurry!" And sure enough, before they started on their way again, a messenger came with the news that the little girl had died. But Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

Arriving at the home of Jairus, Jesus drove away the wailing mourners, entered with three disciples and the parents, took the dead girl's hand, and said, "Young girl, I tell you to stand up!" And she did. The master of life and death had compassion for a grieving family and gave them back their child. Families form the very core of God's plan for his people. Jesus cares for the families represented by your kids every bit as much as he cared for the family of Jairus.

### **Colossians 3:12-21**

Being a member of a loving family is *work!* While we look to the interests of others, we need to be ready to forgive quickly when our own wants and needs get less than top priority. It's unrealistic to say there should never be spats and hurt feelings, but it's quite realistic to expect loving communication and freely given forgiveness.

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS**

Teaching a lesson on families is always tricky because you can't be sure what kinds of family-related trauma your kids may be facing. Single-parent and blended families are nearly as common in the church as in society at large.

Because children tend to blame themselves for whatever goes wrong in their families, it's important for each child to come away from this lesson with the clear understanding that his or her family is important to God, no matter what that family looks like. The Bible is full of stories about imperfect families. Use this lesson to help kids understand that they can serve God by showing respect, love, and care for each member of their families.

# The Lesson

## ATTENTION GRABBER

### Baby Boom

#### Teacher Tip

Be sure to collect and discard all broken balloon pieces promptly to prevent choking hazards.



As kids arrive, assign them to teams of four, keeping even numbers of younger and older children or adults on each team. If the number of people in your class isn't evenly divisible by four, ask for volunteers to be helpers. Give each team member an uninflated balloon. Place a long strip of masking tape down one side of the room, about five feet from a wall. Have teams stand behind that line. Have helpers place the following items by the wall opposite each team: a large potato, a bowl of water, a bar of soap, two paper towels, and a safety pin.

Say: **We're going to start our lesson on families today with a wild and crazy baby boom relay. When I say "go," blow up and tie off your balloon as quickly as you can. You can help your teammates—it's okay if your "stronger windbags" blow up all the balloons. Once your balloons are tied off, drop them on the floor and "hatch" them by sitting on them and popping them. When your team has hatched all its balloons, you and your teammates will take turns running to the opposite wall to do these four tasks:**

- ◆ Use soap, water, and a paper towel to wash and dry the potato "baby."
- ◆ Pin a paper towel "diaper" on the potato baby.
- ◆ Rock the baby and sing one verse of "Jesus Loves Me."
- ◆ Toss the baby back to the rest of the team.

**I'll give you a minute to decide which team member will do each task. You all have to participate. My helpers will make sure you perform each task carefully and completely.**

Give teams a few moments to decide which teammate will do each task. Review the directions and assure kids that you'll call out the directions during the game.

When the teams have organized themselves, say "go!" Keep a close watch on each team's progress and be ready to prompt teams on their next task. Helpers can determine if tasks need to be repeated. When all the potato babies have been cared for and tossed to team members behind the line, have kids give themselves a round of applause.

Then say: **Sit in a circle with your teammates and your potato baby and discuss these questions:**

- ◆ **How was working together in this game like how families work together?** (They have to take turns taking care of little children; families are in a hurry most of the time; caring for babies is hard work.)

◆ **How was it different?** (You wouldn't throw a real baby; in families parents usually do more work than children.)

◆ **What are some things you remember about being a teeny-tiny child?** (I remember a rocking horse; I remember blowing out birthday candles; I remember getting a puppy.)

Call everyone together and invite groups to share what they learned in their discussions.

Say: **It takes lots of work to raise a child. When you were little, your parents had to watch over you constantly. They fed you and changed you in the middle of the night—even when they were so sleepy they could hardly stand up! God puts us in families because he knows that we all need that special love and care that a family gives. Today we're going to learn that ★ Jesus cares about our families.**

## BIBLE STUDY

### **Jairus Visits (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43)**

You may want to ask a teenager or adult to visit your classroom in costume as Jairus and tell the story "A Desperate Father" on the next page. Or, if you have parents in your class, ask for a volunteer to slip on a Bible-times costume and read the story.

Say: **I've asked a special visitor to come to our class today and tell us how Jesus helped his family. Let's welcome Jairus!**

Have "Jairus" shake hands with the children and ask their names. Then have him gather everyone in a circle on the floor to hear his story.

After the story, have everyone give Jairus a round of applause. Then ask:

◆ **Do you think it was easy or hard for Jairus to ask Jesus for help?** (Easy, because he was afraid his daughter would die; hard, because he might get in trouble with the other Jewish leaders and lose his job.)

◆ **How did Jairus feel when he had to push through the crowd to get to Jesus?** (Scared that he'd be too late; afraid that Jesus might not come in time.)

◆ **Why did Jesus agree to go with Jairus when he was already talking to a whole crowd of people?** (Because he knew how much Jairus loved his daughter; because Jairus had lots of faith; because he cared about Jairus' family.)

Say: **★ Jesus cares about our families today, just as he cared for Jairus' family long ago. Let's have some fun discovering more of what the Bible has to say about families.**

## A DESPERATE FATHER

(based on Mark 5:21-24, 35-43)

Good morning! When I heard that you were learning that ★ Jesus cares about our families, I just had to visit your class. You see, Jesus did something for my family that I'll never, ever forget.

My name is Jairus, and I'm a leader of the synagogue in the city of Capernaum. A synagogue is like a Jewish church. People come to the synagogue to worship God, pray, listen to the priests, and read from the Scriptures.

When we heard that Jesus was coming to our town, everyone was excited. Well, almost everyone. Some of the Jewish leaders here and in Jerusalem think Jesus is a fake. I don't agree. No one but the Son of God could do the miracles Jesus does! But I've learned to keep quiet about my opinions so that I don't get in trouble.

My story is about my daughter. She's a 12-year-old bundle of energy and laughter and love! One night my wife heard our daughter cry out in her sleep. She got up to see what was wrong, then came running back to me.

"Jairus! Jairus!" she cried, shaking my shoulder. "Our daughter is burning up with fever! I don't know what's wrong—what shall we do?"

We sat by her bed the rest of the night, but there was nothing we could do to help her. By morning she didn't even know who we were. A hard lump of fear knotted in my chest.

"She's going to die, isn't she?" my wife asked.

Just then I heard some of our neighbors out in the street. "Come down to the lake," they shouted to anyone who would listen. "Jesus, the teacher from Nazareth, is there."

"If anyone can help our daughter, Jesus can," I told my wife excitedly. "If I could just

get him to come here..."

"Hurry then, Jairus," my wife urged. "Go quickly! You must get him to come before it's too late."

I found Jesus in the middle of a huge crowd of people. "Let me through!" I cried, but everyone wanted to be close to Jesus. I pushed and shoved until I finally got through. Then I fell at Jesus' feet.

"My little daughter is dying! Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live," I begged.

Jesus agreed to come. "We must hurry!" I urged. But then a woman touched Jesus' cloak and was healed. When Jesus stopped to talk to her, I almost panicked. Then I felt one of my servants tugging at my sleeve.

"Your daughter is dead," he said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

Before I could respond, Jesus looked me straight in the eye. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Just believe."

I tried to believe—what else could I do? When we arrived at my house, Jesus asked the mourners, "Why are you crying and making so much noise? The child is not dead, only asleep."

Some people laughed at Jesus, but I kept on praying he was right. He went to the bed where she lay all white and still. He took her hand and commanded, "Young girl, I tell you to stand up!" And she stood up, ran to my wife and me, and gave us a big hug.

Jesus smiled at us as we stood there hugging and crying. He gently reminded us to give our daughter something to eat, and then he left. I'll never forget that day. I learned that Jesus really does care about families, and not only families in Bible times. ★ Jesus cares about your family, too.

## LIFE APPLICATION

### Countin' on You!

Have kids rejoin their groups of four. Have the extra people who were helpers during the Attention Grabber join other groups—it's okay to have groups of different sizes.

**Say: In your group, decide who will be the mom, who will be the dad, who will be a big kid, and who will be a little kid. It's okay to have more than one big kid or little kid.**

While groups are assigning their roles, set on a table sandwich bags; several tablespoons; and bowls of dried cranberries, M&M's, and raisins.

**Say: When I call out "dads," I want all the dads to pop up and take turns telling what families count on dads to do. When you've named all the things you can think of, I'll tell you what to do next. Then we'll repeat the game with all the other family members. When we're finished, you'll have a delicious treat to enjoy. Here we go. Dads!**

Have all the dads pop up and take turns telling what families count on dads to do. Kids might mention taking care of the car, mowing the lawn, cooking on the grill, bringing home a paycheck, talking through problems, or helping with schoolwork.

After the dads have named all the responsibilities they can think of, say: **OK, dads, run to the table and take a sandwich bag to everyone in your group.**

Then call out "moms." Kids may mention planning birthday parties, getting groceries, planning meals, bringing home a paycheck, taking care of people when they're sick, tucking children in at night, or taking kids to music lessons. When kids have named all the responsibilities they can think of, have the moms run back and forth between the table and their groups, putting a spoonful of raisins in each person's bag.

Next call out, "big kids." Kids may mention taking out the garbage, feeding the pets, helping with dishes, mowing the lawn, baby-sitting, or running errands. When kids have named all the responsibilities they can think of, have the big kids run back and forth between the table and their groups, putting a spoonful of dried cereal in each person's bag.

Finally call out, "little kids." Kids may mention such things as giving hugs, telling jokes, bringing joy and laughter, picking up toys, and obeying parents. When kids have named all the things they can think of, have the little kids run back and forth between the table and their groups, putting a spoonful of M&M's in each person's bag.

Encourage kids to enjoy their treats as they discuss these questions in their groups:

◆ **What did we gain by working together as a family in this activity?** (We got a good treat; food!)

### Teacher Tip

*Be open to all of the suggestions, even if they don't conform to traditional roles.*





◆ **What do we gain by working together in our real families?** (A happy home; good feelings; love for each other.)

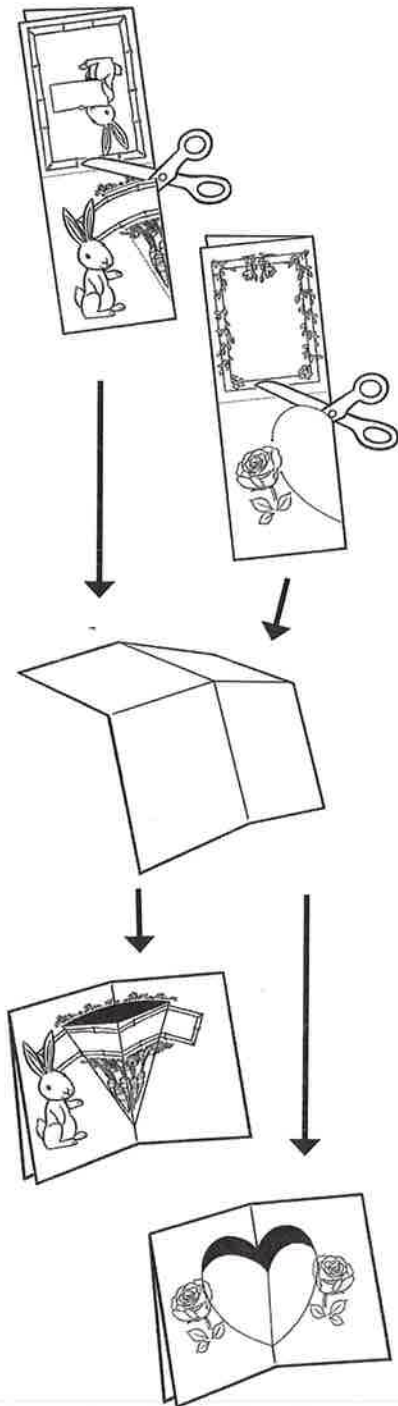
◆ **Why do you think God put us in families?** (So we can care for each other; so we'll have people who love us.)

Invite kids to share what they learned from their discussions.

Then say: **In families, we count on each other for lots of things. And that's why God put us in families. Not all families look alike, so sometimes we count on each other for different things. Listen to what the Bible says about how important it is to take care of each other in our families.**

Have a volunteer look up and read 1 Timothy 5:8.

Say: **The Bible tells us that taking care of each other in our families is one of the most important things we can do. God put us in families so we would have people to love us and take care of us. That's why ★ Jesus cares about our families.**



## COMMITMENT

### Thanks to You!

Say: **When you put people together under the same roof day after day and year after year, things won't always be perfect! We all get the crabbies and grouchies, and when we do, the other people in our families had better watch out! Let's find out more about what the Bible says people should do to build loving, happy families.**

Distribute Bibles to each group. Assign half of the groups Colossians 3:12-14. Assign the other groups Colossians 3:15-21. Have groups search their passages for God's instructions for families. Allow two or three minutes for study, and then call everyone together and ask groups to report what they discovered.

Say: **Turn to a partner and discuss these questions:**

◆ **Which of these instructions is hardest for you to follow?** (Obeying parents; being thankful when things aren't going well.)

◆ **What can you do to get better at it?** (Ask God to remind me; think of others instead of just thinking of myself.)

Say: **I know there's one thing we can all do better. When we count on people for the same thing day after day, it's easy to forget to say thank you. So today we're going to take time to make thank you notes for the people in our families.**

Set out scissors, markers or colored pencils, and photocopies of the "From the Bottom of My Heart" and "Thanks a Bunch" hand-outs. Encourage kids to make cards for people in their families who would appreciate a special thank you. Have kids decorate their cards and fill in the names of the people who'll receive them. Then demonstrate how to fold and cut each card.

1. Cut around the border of each card.

2. Fold each card in half the long way.

3. Cut the heart from the top center to the upper dots; then cut from the bottom center to the lower dots.

4. Cut the "Thanks a Bunch" banner from the top center to the upper dots and from the dot below the carrots to the banner.

5. Fold each card in half the other way.

6. Pull the center of each card forward and fold it as you close the card so the design will pop up when the card is opened.

As kids create their cards, circulate and ask questions such as "What's one really happy time you remember sharing with your family?" and "What do you like best about your family?"

As time for working on the cards draws to a close, give two-minute and one-minute warnings. Then gather everyone for the closing activity.

### Teacher Tip

*You may want to provide extra handouts for kids to take home so they can make a card for everyone in their families.*



## CLOSING

### Circles of Love

Have kids set their cards aside and then stand in circles in their groups of four and hold hands. If you've invited parents for today's lesson, have families stand together in a circle.

Say: **Listen and follow my instructions carefully.** Give these instructions in a spirit of quiet reflection, pausing for a moment after each one.

◆ **If you've ever failed to say thank you when someone in your family did something nice for you, drop your hands and close your eyes.**

◆ **If you've ever lost your temper and shouted at a family member, turn around and face away from your circle.**

◆ **If you've ever complained to an outsider about someone in your family, take a step away from your circle.**

◆ **If you've ever hurt the feelings of someone in your family, take another step away.**

◆ **If you've ever tried to encourage someone in your family, turn around.**

◆ **If you've ever helped take care of a family member who was sick, take a step toward your circle.**

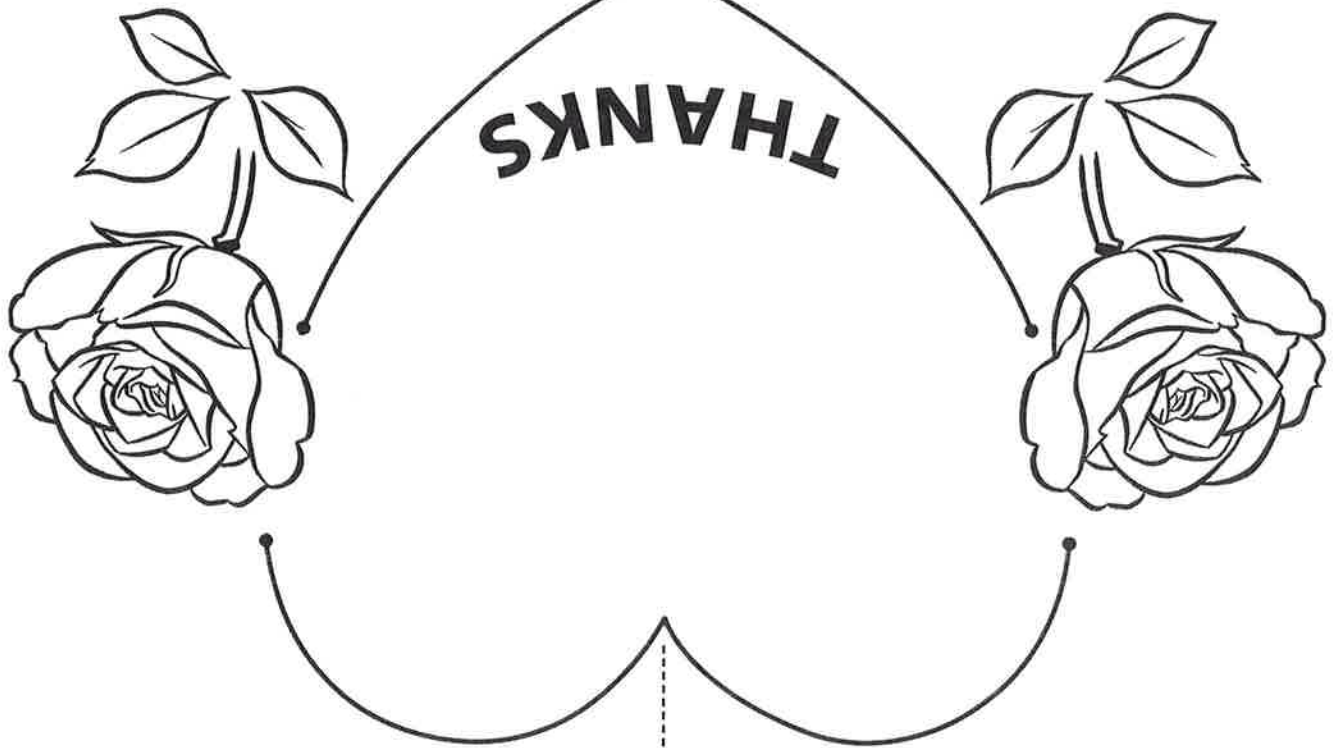
◆ **If you've ever given up your plans to do what another family member wanted to do, take another step toward your circle.**

◆ **If you've ever forgiven a family member who hurt your feelings, open your eyes and put your arms around the people on either side of you.**

Say: Please remain in your circles as I close in prayer.

Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for caring about our families. Remind us this week to show love and appreciation to each member of our families. Help us to be slow to get angry and quick to forgive. In Jesus' name, amen.

*from the bottom of my heart!*



DEAR

*For all the things  
you do each day,  
It makes me very  
glad to say...*

