

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

FAMILY MATTERS OCTOBER 14, 2020

Week 2 of a 4-week series
about family

BOTTOM LINE

Your family matters
even when it's fractured.

SCRIPTURE

*The Biblical account of
Jacob stealing Esau's
birthright and blessing*

- Genesis 25:27-34 NIV
- Genesis 27:1-38 NIV

*"By faith Isaac blessed
Jacob and Esau in regard to
their future."*

- Hebrews 11:20 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students realize
that no family is "perfect"
and to find something to be
thankful for or appreciate
about their imperfect
family.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Keep in mind that the word "fractured" will mean a lot of different things to a lot of different families. For some, it simply means they argue with, get annoyed by, or just don't like being around their family sometimes. But for others, having a fractured family could mean they come from a home filled with dysfunction and potentially even danger. Pay attention to the way your students talk about their families' fractures this week. Small things they say could give you big clues about things going on in their homes.

>> DURING GROUP

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DISCUSS THIS:

- If you could choose to be a part of any fictional family, who would you choose and why?
- Do you think it's possible to have a "perfect" family? Why or why not?
- What do you think people mean when they say, "You have the perfect family"?
- Why do some people feel pressure to appear perfect? Do you feel this pressure at home? At school? At a sport or activity? Other places?
- Do you relate more to Jacob or Esau in today's Bible story? Why?
- Share a story about a disagreement you have had with a family member. What did you learn through the experience?
- How does it make you feel to know there's no such thing as the "perfect" family?

DO THIS:

Set out note cards and ask your small group members to write down one thing they're thankful for when it comes to their family on each note card. They can use as many cards as they'd like. When everyone is finished, read the cards out loud together! If you have any students struggle with what to write, suggest this: "I'm thankful that God can use my family even though it's not perfect."

- Encourage group members to share more about what they wrote. Can they tell a story that further illustrates their point?
- How does focusing on what you're thankful for rather than what you're frustrated with change the way you think about your family?

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

HIGH
SCHOOL
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GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand
that their family is part
of God's story, and to
encourage them to find
something to be thankful
for or appreciate about
their imperfect family.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week's topic is fairly heavy, as it addresses the brokenness we can all find in our families. Remind students that small group needs to be a safe space to talk about some of our most difficult family issues. Have them promise confidentiality. Since it is still early in the year, your group members may not be ready to open up completely about what they are facing in their homes. Don't force it. Also, be aware that for some students, hearing or talking about serious topics can cause anxiety. Pay attention to physical and social cues your students are sending that could signal discomfort or anxiety.

>> DURING GROUP

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed and ask thoughtful follow-up questions as the conversation unfolds. Don't feel like you need to answer every question.

DISCUSS THIS:

- If you could be a part of any real or fictional family, which family would you pick?
- What part of the message did you most relate to? In what way is your family similar to something you heard?
- Share about a time you pulled a "Jacob" on your family. Have you ever fallen victim like Esau? Tell the group about that experience.
- Do you feel like you impact the emotional temperature of your family? In what ways do you tend to be part of the problem? In what ways are you a problem solver or peacemaker?
- What advice would you give to a friend who believes their family will never be different than how it is now?
- Jacob and Esau probably would be surprised to learn they were such a big part of God's story – despite their dysfunction. In what ways do you think God could use your family in God's story? How could something you have gone through, or something you are currently going through, be used for God's glory or to help someone else?
- Share something you are thankful for or appreciate about your family. How could focusing on these things be helpful in times of trouble or frustration?
- How can our small group support one another as we deal with family issues?

>> AFTER GROUP

Reach out to your students individually this week to encourage them in their specific family situations. This would also be a good time to introduce yourself and/or reach out to the parents of your students. Remind parents that you are partnering with them and want the best for their student and their family. Ask what you can do to support their family.