



DON'T GROW UP

LIVING LIKE GOD'S CHILD CHANGES OUR LIVES

The BIG IDEA:

Those who trust in Jesus to forgive their sins become children of God.

The PROBLEM:

Even though we are children of God, we sometimes live like orphans because we don't quite believe God loves and accepts us as we are.

OUR RESPONSE:

Because we are children of God through faith in Jesus, live with a humble confidence.

The SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC:

An incredible change happens when we trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Instead of being outside God's family, we become loved children of God! But sometimes this change doesn't show up in the way we live. Since we don't realize God loves and accepts us unconditionally, we think we need to do things for God to earn his favor. This drive to perform for God destroys us because we can never be good enough for him. But

living out of our true identity as God's children brings true joy and freedom.

The IMAGE:

The child of a superhero has unique privileges and can benefit from their parents' power. In the same way, we can benefit as we recognize that we are actually treasured children of God, the creator of the universe. We may be more special than we realize.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- **What I want the group to know and understand:** Our identity as children of God.
- **What I want the group to experience:** Joy and freedom in knowing God loves us unconditionally and that we don't have to do things for God to earn his favor.
- **How I want the group to respond:** With humble confidence, knowing that we're related to the most significant Being in the universe and that he loves and



LAUNCH:

Imagine you're a child of the president of the United States. How would that change your life for the better?

Allow the group to discuss. Help your group see that this special relationship with the president would bring incredible blessings and privileges. That's a small picture of the blessings and privileges we experience because of our relationship as children of God.

EXPLORE:

1. Read Romans 8:15. What does a spirit of slavery lead to, and what does a spirit of adoption as sons (and daughters) lead to (verse 15)?

A spirit of slavery leads to fear, but a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters leads us to relate to God as our Daddy (this is what the word "Abba" means) and Father. When the writer refers to "spirit" in this context, he's talking about the thing that rules our hearts. We can be ruled by the reality of being under the control of something bad (spirit of slavery). Or as followers of Christ we're ruled by the reality that we're adopted into God's family as dearly loved children.

2. What kind of spirit did we receive upon placing our trust in Jesus to forgive our sins?

We received a spirit of adoption.

3. Read Romans 8:16. What does the Holy Spirit do in our lives if we've trusted in Jesus?

The Holy Spirit lets our spirit know that we're God's children.

4. Read Romans 8:17. If we're children of God, what else are we?

Heirs of God.

5. What does it mean to be an heir? What do you think it means to be an heir of God and fellow heir with Christ?

An heir is someone who gets what belongs to someone else, usually upon the death of that person. According to

Bible scholar Doug Moo, being an heir of God and fellow heir with Christ means we as Christ's followers get all the good things God has promised to his people. These good things include eternal life, forgiveness, love, God's acceptance, joy, and peace.

6. Why do you think suffering with Christ is one of the good things that's part of being an heir of God and fellow heir with Christ?

Allow the group to discuss. It's a good thing because it's an honor to enter in a small way into the suffering Christ endured for us when he bore our sins on the cross. Since Jesus was willing to suffer so greatly to bring so much good into our lives, we honor him when we walk that same path in the power that he provides us through his Spirit.

APPLY:

7. If we've trusted Jesus to forgive our sins, we're children of God. But sometimes we act like we're not a part of God's family, thinking we need to take care of ourselves, be strong on our own, or do things to make God happy with us. In what ways do you act like you're not a part of God's family?

Allow the group to discuss. You may want to help your group think of things you worry about or fear. These things can point to places we don't believe in the depths of our hearts that we're part of God's family.

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APPLY (con't):

8. Think of something that's causing you fear or worry right now. How do you think it would help with what you're facing to remember your identity as a child of God?

Allow the group to discuss. Remembering your identity as a child of God in the face of fear and worry helps us realize that our Father and Daddy is the God of the universe! There's no problem that's too big for him to handle. That provides supernatural peace.

9. How does having God's acceptance change the way you value the acceptance of important people in your life (like parents, teachers, friends, teammates, coaches, and boyfriends or girlfriends)?

Allow the group to discuss. Knowing that the most significant person in the universe accepts us makes the acceptance of others less important. Everyone in the world can reject us, but it's okay because the most important Person accepts us unconditionally.

10. How does knowing you're a child of God affect the temptation to base your worth on the things you do for God and others?

Allow the group to discuss. It crushes that temptation because we realize that God approves of us regardless of how well or poorly we perform.