

# LESSON 4:

## Growing with God's Family

### LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide new believers to learn more about God's family and their part in it:
  - God's family can be found throughout the world.
  - God's family members care for and help each other.
  - God's family has a job and purpose in the world.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of their understanding of this new life with Jesus in God's family.
- To discuss some practical ways to begin to find and connect with people in God's family.

### KEY VERSES:

**JOHN 13:34-35 NIV** – "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**HEBREWS 10:25 NIV** – "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another."

### INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

We belong. We are not alone. This is the great news of today's lesson. As you review scriptures about God's family, you get to encourage children in their understanding of the Church (God's family) as a great place to grow in love together.

### Lesson Overview

#### Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Review, Families Discussion)  
Prayer

#### Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Family Is Big (Scripture & Discussion)  
You Are Not Alone (Scripture & Discussion)  
What Does God's Family Do? (Scripture & Discussion)  
Many Parts, One Job (Brick Activity)

#### Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Believers Pray for Peter, Discussion)

#### Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

Loving One Another (Scripture Activity)  
Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

**TOTAL TIME: 60-90 minutes**

### Materials Needed

#### BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 4
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 4 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- Family photo
- Globe or world map (optional)

#### ADDITIONAL SUPPLY OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 4 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or notebooks for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

# Welcome, Introduction & Review

(10-20 minutes)

## Welcome (Welcome, Review, Introduction to Lesson)

**Materials:** *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 4 (optional)  
Pens or pencils for each (optional)  
A picture of your own family (optional)

### ☺ FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- Ask children about their week. ***Have you spent time learning God's Word this week?*** Discuss and share a lesson you (the teacher) might have learned. ***Did anyone learn an important lesson to obey?***
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking. If possible, share an example of God working in your own life.
- Do students have questions about Jesus, prayer or God's Word? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss them later.

### ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

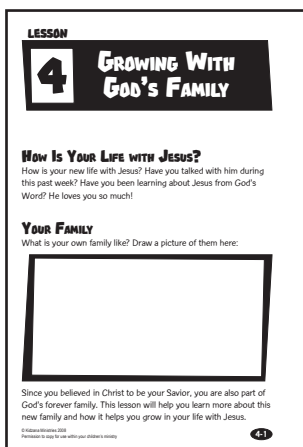
- ***What is your family like?*** Enjoy listening to students' answers and getting acquainted with their families and regular family life.
- Remind students that since they believed in Jesus Christ to be their Savior, they have also become part of a new forever family: God's family.
- In this lesson, we will learn about how important this family is for helping us grow, and for helping the world to know Jesus.

### ♥ PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about their friendship with Jesus and the importance of God's family in growing their relationship with him.

### 📖 BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw pictures of their families. Discuss families together. Enjoy learning about their lives.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Teachers may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading children through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.



# Scripture, Background & Discussion

(20-30 minutes)

## God's Family Is Big (Scripture & Discussion)

**Materials:** Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)  
Globe or world map (optional)



### BIBLE LOOK-UP

- **How do we know we are in God's family?** God's Word tells us that this is what happens when we believe in Jesus.
- **Read John 1:12.** When we believe in Jesus, we become children of God, along with all others who believe in Jesus.



### FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- **How many other people believe in Jesus around the world?** A lot! About one-third of all the people who live on earth say they are part of this family. This means they believe in Jesus as their Savior.
- If a globe or world map is available, show it to children. Together, find the location in which you live. Notice all the other nations on the earth. Most of them have at least a few people who know and love Jesus. (If a globe or map is not available, simply think of the names of different nations.)
- Teach children that even though many people believe in Jesus, many more do NOT know about Jesus yet (about two-thirds of the world). Invite children to hold up all fingers of both hands. Fold down three fingers. This is about how many people believe in Jesus. The rest (still standing) are the ones who DO NOT know Jesus. **Which group has more people?** Those who do not believe.
- **What does God want his family to do about all these people who do not know him?** Tell them! We will talk about it more together.

## You Are Not Alone (Scripture & Discussion)

**Materials:** Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)



### BIBLE LOOK-UP

- With all these people who believe in Jesus, we know that we are not alone. There are many other words used to describe God's family. All of them help us realize that we are not alone.
- Look up these scriptures. Ask children to tell you which words in each verse help us to know we are not alone.

**Romans 12:4-5** – God's family is like a body; there are many parts; we belong to each other.

**1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:22** – God's family is also like a building of "living stones" (not real bricks – just imaginary). We are being built together as a place where God lives.

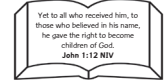


### FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- There are many other words used to describe God's family. All of the descriptions help us to know that God's family is a group of people who grow in ...
  - ... love for God.
  - ... love for each other.
  - ... love for others around us (near and far).
- **In what ways will it help you to know you are not alone? How can this help you grow in your life with Jesus?**

### God's Family Is Big

How do you know you are in God's family? God's Word tells us that this is what happened when you believed in Jesus.



### So, How Big Is This Family?

It is huge. Nearly one-third of all the people who live on the earth are part of this family. They believe in Jesus as their Savior. Where do you live? Can you find it on this map of the world?



THINK ABOUT THIS

- Most people still do NOT know about Jesus.
- What does God want his family to do about this? Tell them!

4-2 ANSWER KEY (SEE PAGE 4-2)



### BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read the scripture on page 4-2 and consider their place on the globe.

### You Are Not Alone

The Bible uses many other words to describe God's family. All of them help us to realize we are not alone.



#### We Are Like a Body:

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:4-5 NIV



#### We Are Like a Building:

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house ... And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. 1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:22 NIV



In the verses above, circle or underline words that remind us that we are not alone, we belong together.

Most importantly, God's family are people who grow together in ...
 

- ... love for God.
- ... love for each other.
- ... love for others around us (near and far).

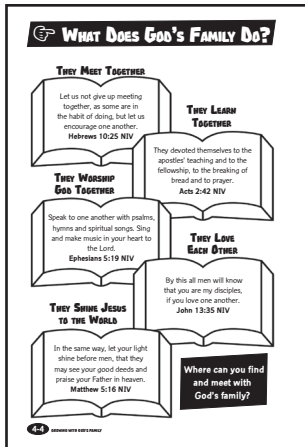
What will you enjoy most about God's family?

4-3 ANSWER KEY (SEE PAGE 4-3)



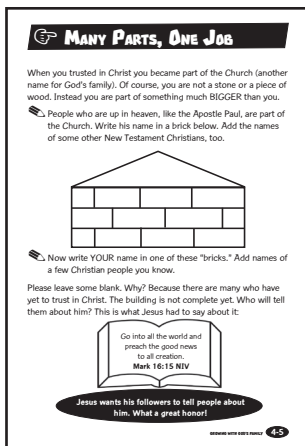
### BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read the scriptures and circle answers on page 4-3.



#### BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures on page 4-4.



#### BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may follow these activities with a Bible, using page 4-5.

## What Does God's Family Do? (Scripture & Discussion)

**Materials:** Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)



### BIBLE LOOK-UP

- God's Word helps us to understand even more about what God's family does together (both near and far):
  - Hebrews 10:25 – They meet together.** Often believers meet in churches. Some churches are fancy. Some churches are in people's homes or other meeting places. Some churches are small. Some churches are big. The most important thing is that people who love Jesus gather together to encourage each other.
  - Acts 2:42 – They learn together.** Believers study God's Word. They share with each other, they share meals with each other, and they pray together.
  - Ephesians 5:19 – They worship God together.** They read psalms together (poems of worship from God's Word). They sing songs that worship Jesus.
  - John 13:35 – They love each other.** As non-believers watch God's family love each other, they will notice the difference. They will see that Jesus' love is in his people.
  - Matthew 5:16 – They shine Jesus to the world.** Whether alone or together, people in God's family are the only ones who have the job of shining the love and truth about Jesus to the world.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What will you enjoy most about God's family?*
- How will you find and meet with people in God's family? Is there a children's meeting or a church or a Sunday school nearby? Can you attend? What other help will you need to meet with God's family?*

## Many Parts, One Job (Brick Activity)

**Materials:** Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)

Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils



### FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- When we trust in Christ, we become part of the Church. (This is not a building in our neighborhood; it is another name for God's big family.) We are not following Jesus all on our own. We are part of a family that is MUCH BIGGER than ourselves or any local group we might meet with.



### WRITING/RESPONSE

- On the erasable board or paper, draw a simple building with many bricks.
- Teach that people who are up in heaven, like the Apostle Paul, are part of the Church. Invite a student to write Paul's name in a brick. One by one, add the names of some other New Testament Christians.
- Finally, invite students to write their own names in the bricks.
- Leave some blank. Why? Because there are many who have yet to trust in Jesus as their Savior all around the world. The building (God's family) is not complete yet. There is room for millions more.



### BIBLE LOOK-UP

- Who will tell them about him?** Read what Jesus had to say to his followers about this. **Read Mark 16:15.** Jesus tells his followers to go into all the world and preach the good news to ... whom? To everyone.
- Can you think of a person you know who does not know Jesus yet?** Remember these names to pray for them later.

# Bible Story & Discussion

(10-20 minutes)

## A Bible Story (Believers pray for Peter; Acts 12:5-16)

**Materials:** Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)



### BIBLE READING

- Read the story aloud from the Bible (an easy-to-understand version, if possible). Then discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, children will also begin to notice how you find a passage of scripture, read it (without reading the numbers), think about it, and consider lessons from it for our lives.
- Especially notice the things God's people did together: met together, prayed together, and loved each other. Peter's troubles all happened because he was preaching the gospel in Jerusalem.

### 1. The Church was brand new.

- Jesus had taught his disciples for several years. He died, rose again, and returned to heaven to rule with God.
- He left his twelve disciples in charge. Peter was one of these disciples.
- The disciples preached about Jesus wherever they could. They prayed for people who were sick, and God healed them. They worked together with other believers. It was an amazing time of love and growth in God's family.

### 2. Many people did not like Jesus or his followers.

- The leaders in Jerusalem did not like what Peter and others preached about Jesus. They treated Jesus' followers as enemies.
- They did many things to try to stop God's people. They hurt many. They even killed some.
- Peter was arrested and put in prison. He was expecting to die.

### 3. The Church (believers) prayed.

- They gathered together at Mary's home and prayed.
- They prayed hard.
- They had great love for Peter and wanted him to be released.

### 4. God answered their prayer with a miracle.

- An angel came to Peter in the night. Peter thought he was having a dream.
- The angel told Peter to get dressed. He led him past the guards, through the iron gate to the city and out onto the street.

### 5. Peter finds the believers.

- He knocked on the door. Rhoda, a servant, answered the door.
- She recognized Peter. She was so excited, she forgot to let him in. She ran to tell the others.
- Finally, they let Peter in. They were amazed.
  - What did God do as the believers prayed?**
  - In what ways did the believers help each other?**
  - What else do you learn about God's family?**

**A BIBLE STORY**

**BELIEVERS PRAY FOR PETER**

The book of Acts is full of stories about when the Church was new, just after Jesus had lived on earth. There was much persecution of Christians. But the believers helped each other. This is one story.

**Acts 12:5-16 NIV**

(The Bible book of Acts, chapter 12, verses 5 to 16)

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

"Then the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

"Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating.' 'When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

"Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. 'When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she can't help without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!' 'You're out of your mind,' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, 'It must be his angel.'

"But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astounded.

**THINK ABOUT THIS**

- What did God do for the believers as they prayed together?
- What do you learn about God's family?



### BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read the Bible story and consider discussion questions on page 4-6.



# Response & Application Activities

(20-30 minutes)

**LOVING ONE ANOTHER**

One of the main jobs of God's family is to love one another. There are many Bible verses that teach us about this.

➔ For each Bible verse below, fill in the blank with one or more words showing how God wants his people to treat each other.

**ONE ANOTHER**

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. **Galatians 5:13 NIV**

**ONE ANOTHER**

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32 NIV**

**ONE ANOTHER**

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. **1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV**

**ONE ANOTHER**

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. **1 Peter 1:22 NIV**

**ONE ANOTHER**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **James 5:16 NIV**

Where and when will YOU meet with God's family to practice loving one another?

- BOOKLET OPTION**
- If using booklets, children may use page 4-7 to review these scriptures.

**SOMETHING TO DO...**

**VISIT A CHURCH: WRITE IN YOUR JOURNAL**

If you can, visit a church or children's meeting with other people who are following Jesus, like you. After your visit, write down or draw what you saw and learned there.

**ASK YOUR QUESTIONS**

Do you have more questions about your new life with Jesus or God's family? Write your questions here or in your journal. Ask another person in God's family to help you find answers.

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**TAKE TIME TO PRAY**

Talk to God anywhere. Ask for his help to find a group of God's family to meet and grow with. Ask for his help to get good friends who will also help you grow strong in your life with Jesus. Pray for other people you know who are part of God's family.

**A Bible Verse to Remember**

A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. **John 13:34-35 NIV**

- BOOKLET OPTION**
- If using booklets, work through these final activities on page 4-8.

## Loving One Another (Scripture Activity)

**Materials:** Bible for teacher (or each reading student, if available)

Erasable board or large paper and something to write with

### ??DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- One of the main jobs God gives to people in his family is to love one another. This is a big job. It is also wonderful.
- Together, read the Bible verses below. After reading each, find the words that tell how God wants his people to treat each other. If an erasable board or paper is available, list these words as you find them.

**Galatians 5:13** – Serve one another in love.

**Ephesians 4:32** – Be kind and tender to one another; forgive each other.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** – Encourage each other; build each other up.

**1 Peter 1:22** – Love each other deeply, from the heart.

**James 5:16** – Admit to one another that you have sinned; pray for one another.

**Romans 12:10** – Be devoted to one another; honor others more than yourselves.

- What will you enjoy most about God's family?**
- Where can you meet together with other people from God's family?**

## Something to Do: (Journal, Questions, Prayer)

**Materials:** Blank notebook or tablet of paper for each (optional)

Pens or pencils

### ✍ WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to work in their notebooks or journals, if they have them. If possible, encourage them to visit a church or children's meeting with other people who follow Jesus. Ask them to write down what they saw and learned there.
- Invite children to write other questions. Consider any questions they may be asking this week. Help them find answers.

### ♥ PRAYER

- Remind children they can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything.
- Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray for students to find a place to meet with God's family so they can grow in love for each other, for God, and for the world.
- Do you know someone who does not know Jesus?** Pray together for these people to come to know him as their Savior – to be added to God's family.

### 😊 FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, remind them about important words Jesus told his disciples about their friendships with one another. **Read John 13:34-35.** God's family is known by its love for each other. Enjoy giving love to others. Enjoy receiving it, too.