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Sunday School That Clicks

Lesson 3 / March 21, 2010

Families Matter

for use as

STEP 1 

Lesson 3

Focus:

God knits the hearts of His family together.

Lesson 3

Bible Basis:

Ruth 1:1-9, 14b, 16

Students will discuss why families matter and what they can do to be more closely knit with the families they are a part of.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Families Matter

ECONOMIC RECESSION BRINGS MORE JOB LOSSES

Before class, write the following on a board or sheet of newsprint: Families matter.

Ask students what thoughts, words, or pictures come to mind when they see this phrase, and summarize their answers. For example, they may think of the love and devotion they have for their family or the support and encouragement they get from it. Or, if their family life is a bit disjointed, they may share a desire to be part of a family that gets along and is affirming. Then ask the class these questions:

- ▶ What is a family?
- ▶ What are some benefits in being part of a family?

Students may answer that a family is a group of individuals knit together by a common characteristic or goal and that in a good family environment, members of a family offer encouragement, unconditional love, and help when times are tough.

Today's lesson focuses on the story of Ruth and Naomi and how their family tie affected Ruth's decision to help Naomi in a time of need. But first, take a look at how a woman facing a tragedy was helped by those who were part of her "family."

OPENING STORY [read it aloud to your class, or make copies and pass it around]:

Lesson 3
Memory Verse

But Ruth replied,
 “Don’t urge me to
 leave you or to turn
 back from you. Where
 you go I will go, and
 where you stay I will
 stay. Your people will
 be my people and your
 God my God.”

—Ruth 1:16

DEVASTATING LOSS SHOWS HOW MUCH PEOPLE CARE

Earlier this month, about 450 family members, friends, and church members who knew David Hames gathered in Vanguard Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to remember his life and launch 100 red balloons into the blue afternoon sky.

On January 12, Hames, a creator of children’s films working under contract for Compassion International, had just returned to the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, when the devastating earthquake struck. The hotel collapsed, and Hames was buried in the rubble along with Dan Woolley, who was also working for Compassion. Woolley was rescued alive on January 15th—but no one knew if Hames was still alive.

Hames’s wife Renee knew he had a backpack with him filled with bottled water and snacks. She and his friends and church family prayed that he would be found alive. Renee said that she felt blessed by friends who “tucked me under their wings and prayed with me, encouraged me, supported me, and cried with me. Because of the support structure they have built around me, I have felt a great peace.”

The body of Hames was eventually found February 5 in the rubble of the hotel, and hearts that were “holding out hope for a miracle” were broken by the news that David’s remains had been identified. A church friend reported that Renee and her two sons, ages 2 and 5, though “grieving the loss of their husband and father,” were comforted by the fact that “he is safe today, at home with our Heavenly Father.”

Renee said that what happened changed her perspective about what is really important. “We spend so much time worrying about the little things. It’s sad it took this to show me that.” But Renee also learned “how much family, friends, and even complete strangers care. It’s a humbling experience, the amount of people who have given gifts and their time to us.” She received gifts and financial support from people throughout the country.

After testimonies from family and friends, the memorial service concluded in the church parking lot, where Renee and her children released the 100 red balloons. The name of David’s film production company was Red Balloon Productions.

[Now form small groups and ask the following questions.]

- ▶ If you asked Renee Hames who her “family” was following the death of her husband, how might she have answered that question? *(Besides her two sons and other relatives, she also might have mentioned*

those who shared in her grief, gave her financial support, and spent time with her as she tried to deal with death of her husband.)

- ▶ **In what ways did she benefit from these family relationships?**
(Renee received financial, emotional, and spiritual support from those who felt they were her "family." She learned in the process that she was not alone in her grief.)
- ▶ **What are some families that you are a part of?** *(We are all part of a family that is related by blood. But most of us are also associated with groups that share a common goal, such as co-workers and members of our church or Sunday school. These can be considered families as well.)*
- ▶ **How has being part of one of these families benefited you?**

(When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher's Guide*, where you read the Scripture and begin to discuss it; your Step 4 appears below.)

News Source:

Colorado Connection - David Hames still missing in Haiti; family gives statement

<http://www.coloradoconnection.com/news/story.aspx?id=402939>

Christian Newswire - Remains of Colorado Filmmaker David Hames Recovered in Haiti

<http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/6084813018.html>

Colorado Springs Gazette - Hames' widow adjusting to life without David

<http://www.gazette.com/articles/hames-94796-david-widow.html>

Colorado Springs Gazette - Filmmaker who died in Haiti quake remembered for faith, humor

<http://www.gazette.com/articles/died-95241-church-haiti.html>

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STEP 4 

Lesson 3
Focus:

God knits the hearts of
His family together.

Lesson 3
Bible Basis:

Ruth 1:1-9, 14b, 16

YOUR FAMILIES MATTER




Ruth's family mattered to her. And she was unwilling to abandon the family connection she had with Naomi to make life easier for herself. She chose to follow a road less traveled by remaining loyal to Naomi and giving her the support she needed during a time that was difficult for both of them. Ruth's commitment to Naomi eventually paid huge dividends. Her devotion to Naomi was noticed by some of those in Naomi's extended family and one of them, Boaz, eventually asked for Ruth's hand in marriage.

All of us are part of at least one family, and most of us are part of many families. We have the family we're related to by blood, we have our church family, and we have others we share a common interest with who we could consider family as well. But no matter who we consider to be our family, we need to show the same devotion to them as Ruth showed to Naomi in her time of need and as Renee Hames's friends showed to her in her time of grief.

We all need our families—but our families also need us. And when we give to the members of our families the support, encouragement, and affirmation they need, we'll find more often than not that they give the same things back to us in return.

[Activity]

Have your students return to the groups they had in Step 1 and think about the many "family" relationships they are involved with as they discuss the following:

-  What words best describe the current state of your relationship with the members of your immediate family and other families?
-  What are some words that you would like to characterize your relationship with the members of your family or families?
-  What things could you do this week so that your heart is knit more closely with the members of these families?

Lesson 3
Memory Verse

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you go I will go, and
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stay. Your people will
be my people and your
God my God.”

—Ruth 1:16

Students may use words such as supportive, loving, caring, and loyal to describe the relationships they have in their physical, spiritual, or professional families and may use similar words to describe what they would like these relationships to be. Regarding actions steps, they may see a need to be more aware of situations where they have opportunities to give sacrificially to someone in one of their families rather than focusing so much on their own personal desires and comfort. They also may mention they are not giving some members of their families the support or encouragement they need and should make a bigger effort to do so.

Encourage students to do one thing this week to be more closely knit with someone in one of the family groups they are a part of. For example, they could take an elderly relative out for lunch, send a note of encouragement to someone in their church, or make an effort to reach out to someone at work who needs a helping hand or some kind of affirmation.

Close the session with prayer. Thank God for the families we are a part of. Pray that God will help you and your students to be more closely knit to those who are in your families.

(David C. Cook is not affiliated with and does not endorse any Website listed on these pages.)