

# The Family of God



**Theme:** God's grace is available to all. - Proper 7 (12) Yr. C

**Object:** A library card

**Scripture:** For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you. Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT)

This is a membership card to the Public Library. Do you have a library card? If you don't already have one, you should get one. One of the great things about a library card is that it is available to everyone. It doesn't matter if you are young or old. It doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl. It doesn't matter if your skin is red, brown, yellow, black, or white. It doesn't matter where you were born or who your parents are. Everyone is welcome.

Another great thing about the library is that once you become a member, you are entitled to all the benefits and services that the library provides. You can check out books and videos -- even music on a CD. You can go to the library and read magazines and newspapers. You can even use the computer.

Oh, by the way, do you know how much it costs to join the library? Nothing! Membership is free!

You know, that is a pretty good picture of what it is like to be a member of the family of God. The Bible tells us that when we trust in Jesus and are united with him in baptism, we all become the children of God. It doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl. It doesn't matter what color your skin is. When we become a part of the family of God, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

The Bible also tells us that when you belong to the family through Christ Jesus, you are entitled to all the benefits of being a child of God. All of the promises that God has made in His Word belong to you! Isn't that great?

Oh, by the way, do you know how much it costs to become a part of the family of God? Nothing! It is a gift of God!

Dear Father, we are thankful that we can become your children through faith in Jesus Christ. We are thankful that it doesn't matter whether we are girl or boy -- black or white. We are thankful that in Christ we all become one. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 3:26-29

**FAMILY HIDE AND SEEK:** Choose two team leaders. Have the children scatter to find a place to HIDE and SEEK. When one of the team leaders finds someone, that person becomes part of THAT "family" and holds hands to run and find more "family members". Players on each team cannot let go of each

others hands, but must remain together. Continue to play until all players are found and are a part of a "family".

**BALLOON POPPING:** Give children a balloon to blow up and let it fly when the teacher says to "FLY YOUR BALLOON." Wherever the balloon lands, is where the child will go and stand. Continue to play for as long as time allows. At the final balloon blowing time, tell children to tie their balloons and everyone will let their balloon fly up into the air at the same time. Tell children that our balloons today represent everyone in the Family of God who goes different ways and does different things but GOD loves us all and we are in HIS care and of the same Family if we know Jesus as Savior!

**FAITH ENVELOPE:** Decorate an envelope and write FAITH in big colorful letters. Let children fill out a recipe card that says CHILDREN OF GOD on one side and some of the words from today's Bible verse or the teacher can have slips of paper with the Bible verse on it for children to glue to the back side of the recipe card. Slip the card inside the FAITH envelope and encourage children to share their FAITH envelope with others.

**MEMBERSHIP CARD BOARD:** The teacher can make a MEMBERSHIP BOARD before class time, using a large colored poster board. One side of the Membership Board will have a heading of FAMILY OF GOD MEMBERSHIP, and the other side of the board will have a heading of WORLD MEMBERSHIPS. Let children pick cards out of a box or basket that they will tape to one side or another of the Membership Board --- such as "God's Family" would go on the FAMILY OF GOD side of the board; Library card would be taped to the World Membership side of the board. Other ideas for cards would be church membership; football, piano club, swim team, prayer group; helping the homeless membership, baptism, etc.

**FREE MEMBERSHIP CARD:** Provide each child with a credit card size card cut out of poster board. Children can write FREE in bright marker colors on one side and on the other side of the card, they can write the wonderful things that we have in Christ, such as heaven, faith, trust, forgiveness, joy, celebrating, etc. Use a piece of clear contact paper to cover the membership card for children to put in their wallets or purses or in their bedroom drawer at home to remind them of being the Family of God!

**FAMILY LINE UP:** Give each child a piece of paper and for younger children, the teacher can have 4-5 "stick" figures drawn for children to color and decorate. Older children can draw their own... connect all the papers of "family" pictures and hang on the class room wall. Write FAMILY OF GOD above the "family" figures.

**AVAILABLE GRACE TO ALL:** Give children ink pads and let them put finger prints all over a piece of paper. Each child can have a pen or thin marker to draw hands and feet, face, etc on each finger print on the paper. Make eyes big, slanted, slit and make hair curly or straight, long or short. Write GOD'S GRACE AVAILABLE TO ALL at the top of the paper for a title.

**CHILD OF GOD HEADBAND:** Paper strips in various colors (about 3" x 20", etc) can be given to children to color, decorate and add stickers and the words CHILD OF GOD, or FAMILY OF GOD, or GOD'S GRACE FOR ALL. Place on child's head and over lap and tape for child to wear like a headband or crown.

## A Call to Discipleship



**Theme:** Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him.

**Object:** Use a variety of crosses (Bookmark, gold necklace, key chain, wall hanging, etc.)

**Scripture:** Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23 (NLT)

I have something to show you. (Hold up one of the crosses.) You know what this is, don't you? Of course you do, it is a cross. I have several crosses to show you. Here is a cross on a chain that you can wear around your neck. Here is a bookmark made in the shape of a cross, and this is a beautiful cross that is made to be hung on a wall.

Every day we see crosses all around us. People wear them as jewelry, they hang them on the wall, and they use them as key chains. When you pass by a church, it is not unusual to see a cross on the steeple. We even see many people who wear the cross as a tattoo on their body. What comes to your mind when you see a cross? What does the cross mean to you? Is it just a piece of jewelry or a work of art?

One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead."

"And you - who do you say that I am?" Jesus replied.

Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Messiah."

Peter had given the right answer. You would think that would be the end of Jesus' lesson, but it wasn't. Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was. "The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things," he said. "He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead."

Then Jesus called the the crowd of people who had gathered around to come and join him and his disciples. "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it."

So, what does it mean to us? It means that we have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who was willing to give up everything so that we could have everlasting life. It also means that those of us who want to be his followers must also be willing to take up our cross, give up everything, and follow him.

The cross - it is so much more than a piece of jewelry, a work of art, or a decoration on a steeple. It is a reminder of our Savior's great love for us and our call to follow him!

Heavenly Father, thank you that you loved us so much that you sent your Son to die on a cross. As his disciples, help us to take our cross and follow him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**HUNTING RELAY:** Send the class out on a HUNT with a list of things to HUNT for - including bookmarks, gold necklaces, key chains, wall hangings, crosses, etc. Begin the lesson after all the items have been laid out on the class table and let children hold up the items as talked about in the lesson.

**CROSS RELAY:** Divide the class into 2 teams. (This is a little complicated but listen closely...) Each team will send one player to the line to pick up a cross, run back to the team and the team will follow that player with the cross to a designated place in the playing area and then back to the team line. The player will quickly run the cross to the beginning line, drop it in the box or basket, and run back to the team. Then the next player will do the same and will also run back to the team with the cross and the team will follow that player to the designated area and back.... until all the team has an opportunity to run the Cross Relay!

**PAINTED HAND PRINTS:** Spread some paint on each child's one hand and let them place their painted hand print on a poster board and all the hands need to be in a formation of a cross when the prints are completed. When I did this activity, I did these cross-formation-hand-prints on our class room wall for decoration. The kids loved it and enjoyed it for years! So it was a big CROSS on the wall but with the childrens' hand prints!

**CROSS BOOK MARKERS:** Give children construction paper cut in the shape of a cross, as well as other supplies to decorate the cross such as stickers, markers or glitter, etc. For older children, it's unique to let them "tear" out the shape of a cross from construction paper, rather than an even cut.

**CROSS NECKLACES:** Children can do a cross type activity of choice (either cut or torn paper), decorated and hole punched to add a plastic string or yarn to hang around the child's neck.

**CROSS WALL HANGING:** Give children poster board and craft sticks, glue and markers, etc to decorate a large wall hanging with today's BIBLE VERSE on the 'hanging' or "Take up your cross and follow Jesus" words.

**BIBLE VERSE BORDER ART:** Give each child a large cross cut out of a full sheet of construction paper. Tell children to write as small as they can and write today's Bible verse around the border of the cross as many times as they can! See which child can write the verse the most times. Then use ric-rac or star stickers, glitter, etc to decorate the cross. Now have all the children try to say their Bible verse together as a class!!

**FOLLOW JESUS:** The teacher can cut out many crosses and number them from 1 - ? (at least 15 but more is even better). Let children FOLLOW the CROSSES in the numerical order until they get to the highest number that the teacher tells them, for the number of crosses that the teacher has prepared in various parts of the area. The teacher should have a Bible opened by the final cross and have the children read today's Bible verse out of the Bible, and also John 3;16.