Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Key Faith Foundation: God’s Plan for Handling Family Conflict

Key Scriptures: Genesis 4:1-12; Psalm 133; Colossians 3:12-15
Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

**Genesis 4:1-12; Psalm 133; Colossians 3:12-15**

**GRAPPLE QUESTION:** Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

**KEY FAITH FOUNDATION:** God’s Plan for Handling Family Conflict

There will be times in our lives when family members don’t get along—but what are we supposed to do about it? Use these verses to help kids discover that, although there may be conflicts, God wants each of us to take responsibility for creating and maintaining peace in our relationships within our families. Genesis 4:1-7 describes two brothers coming before God with their sacrifices. God accepted Abel’s sacrifice, but rejected Cain’s. Some scholars have suggested that God accepted Abel’s sacrifice because it involved the shedding of blood and rejected Cain’s because it didn’t. However, it’s more likely that God accepted or rejected the sacrifices based on the attitude of the heart. Abel’s sacrifice came from true gratitude for God; Cain’s apparently came from a feeling of obligation. In Genesis 4:7, God’s response to Cain was a loving warning: Be careful what you do because sin can get the best of you. Use these verses to help kids talk about conflicts that happen within their families and think about what happens when issues aren’t resolved. Encourage kids to see what role sin played in Cain’s actions and how our own sin can lead to conflicts within our families.

Genesis 4:8-12 tells us that Cain then murdered Abel, and he lied to God about it. When God confronted him, Cain finally came to his senses and realized that separation from God would mean his own death. Use these verses to help kids talk about what kinds of things can “kill” relationships and encourage kids to discuss what that looks like in their own families.

In nearly every human conflict, there is a choice: to forgive and be reconciled or to hold grudges, hate, and seek revenge. In Psalm 133, David discusses benefits and blessings that accompany living in harmony with others. In Colossians 3:12-15, Paul emphasizes forgiveness, which is essential to peace. Those who practice Christian love enjoy a harmonious existence despite differences, whereas those who follow their selfish desires live in stressful discord. Help kids think about what being clothed in love, mercy, forgiveness, and humility might look like. Then encourage kids to think about whether they might need to seek or grant forgiveness within their families.

**understanding preteens**

Preteens may by nature be moving into an egocentric stage of life. They may be extra sensitive or overreact in situations. Helping them harness situations using reason and God’s Word consistently can be grounding when they’re confronted with family conflict.
# the lesson at a glance

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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple community</strong> <em>(5 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• DVD player</td>
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<td>• snacks</td>
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<td>• Christian music CD</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple games</strong> <em>(10-15 minutes)</em></td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple time</strong> <em>(10 minutes)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sing their favorite songs in unison, and discuss harmony in families.</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple team time</strong> <em>(15 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• Bibles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In small groups, discuss how Cain and Abel may have felt when they brought their sacrifices to God, what role attitudes played in their actions, and what actions kill relationships.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• copy of the Grapple Team Guide for each person</td>
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<td>• scissors</td>
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<td>• newsprint</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple team reports</strong> <em>(10 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• Bibles</td>
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<td>Report what they learned from the Bible passage they studied.</td>
<td>• paper</td>
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<td>• pencils</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple prayer</strong> <em>(5 minutes)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Choose a prayer option.</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>grapple dare</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hear the Grapple dare.</td>
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1 grapple community

Play Christian music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship. Give kids this discussion starter as they eat. Say: **Find out who in our class has the most brothers and sisters.**

2 grapple games

Say: **We’re going to play a game, but you’ll get to choose. Would you rather play Gimme Five (p. 104), where you work in groups of five to name items in a category? Or would you like to play Mystery Identity (p. 105), where one person goes outside while the rest of the group comes up with a new identity that the person has to guess?** Have kids vote on the game they’d like to play. Then lead kids in playing the game.

Say: **Now we’ll play another game. Would you rather play Bodyguard (p. 103), which is a game of tag where bodyguards try to prevent fans from tagging the stars? Or would you like to play Blind Bump (p. 103), where one person who’s blindfolded tries to make it across the room without bumping into the human obstacles?** Have kids vote on the game they’d like to play. Then lead kids in playing the game.

3 grapple time

Lead the entire group in the following:

Say: **Think of your favorite song. Got it? In a moment, I’m going to ask you to sing your favorite song aloud. OK everybody, on the count of three, sing your song. One…two…three.**

Allow 20 seconds of total lack of harmony.

**Tell All**

What was it like listening to everyone singing at once? How is this like or unlike the way our families sound when we’re not getting along?

I’m sorry to tell you that your singing just wasn’t in harmony—your songs didn’t go well together. Listen to what this psalm says about families getting along and living together in harmony. Read Psalm 133 aloud. **God thinks a family living together in harmony is a wonderful thing. But the truth is that families don’t always get along.**

Tell kids about a time your family had a conflict when you were a child.
Do you think my family’s unique? Let’s try something.

Tape a line on the floor from one end of your room to the other. Designate one end of the line as “agree” and the other end as “disagree.” Tell kids that you’ll read a statement and they’ll have to decide to what degree they agree or disagree with it. Then they’ll stand on the line to represent their answers. After you read each statement, tell kids to find one person near them to discuss their answers with for a minute.

The statements:

- Christian families get along all the time.
- When parents fight a lot, they’re going to get a divorce.
- When kids become teenagers, they fight with their parents all the time.
- It’s impossible for brothers and sisters to be friends.

Wow! We had a lot of different answers. Why can’t we all just get along? Let’s grapple with that today!

4 grapple team time

Break into Grapple Teams. Encourage Grapple Team leaders to check in with kids about their week. Grapple Team leaders will facilitate discussion, using the Grapple Team Guide on pages 21-22.

5 grapple team reports

At the end of Grapple Team Time, have kids work with their team to choose one of the options below to report what they discovered.

Option 1: Categorize It
Look at the question you grappled with. Make two columns, and list ways to get along in your family in one column and ways to create conflict in the other. Share what you discovered.

Option 2: Story Time
Create a short story about a family to share what you discovered about living in harmony.

Match Grapple Teams that chose Option 1 with Grapple Teams that chose Option 2. Have teams present their reports. (Do this one team at a time if you have only two Grapple Teams.)
6 grapple prayer

Read the Grapple Prayer options. Have the group choose one prayer option that everyone will do. Allow kids time to pray about what they discovered. Then close in prayer.

Option 1: Bible Prayers
Look at one of today’s Key Scriptures—Colossians 3:12-15. As you read silently, replace every “you” with your name.

Option 2: Color Prayers
Use a crayon that best matches your feelings when your family has a conflict. Talk to God as you draw about the conflict.

7 grapple dare

Have a “Family Peace” fashion show. Encourage models to walk around the room showing off their new outfits.

Say: There will always be times your family members don’t all get along, but what are you going to do about it? I dare you to choose one piece of clothing from our “Family Peace” outfit to help you get along with your family this week. Maybe you’ll choose the vest of mercy or the gloves of kindness. I dare you to use your “piece of clothing” to create peace in your family during a time of conflict!

(Find the Parent Page for this lesson on the enhanced DVD. Have each child give a copy to his or her parent. Alternatively, send the file to parents via e-mail.)
In your Grapple Team, use this guide to grapple with today’s question.

What in the world would a family living in paradise have to fight about?


Why do you think Abel’s sacrifice was better than Cain’s?

*In Pairs* How would you have felt if you were Cain? What would you do or say to your brother if he won some big contest with God and you lost?

Read Genesis 4:8-12.

What kind of relationship do you think Cain and Abel had before this happened? What things can “kill” relationships with our family members?

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Read Genesis 4:7 again.

*In Pairs* What role did sin play in Cain’s actions? Name some examples of sin that might create conflict in our families.

This next passage is actually about churches, but it’s good for families, too.
Read Colossians 3:12-15.
List all the things we’re supposed to “wear” to help us get along.
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Choose a model on your team. Using the newsprint, scissors, and tape, create a “Family Peace” outfit for your model that shows how to wear these things in a family so people get along better. For example, maybe you’ll make a vest for “tenderhearted mercy” because the vest goes over your model’s heart. Don’t leave out anything! Once every team has finished, we’ll have a fashion show.

grapple team reports
With your team, choose one of the options below to report what you discovered.

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