Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Why Can’t I Be an Only Child?

Key Faith Foundation: God’s Plan for Loving Our Siblings

Key Scriptures: Matthew 10:16-22; John 21:15-19; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
**Bible basis for teachers**

*Matthew 10:16-22; John 21:15-19; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

- GRAPPLE QUESTION: Why Can’t I Be an Only Child?
- KEY FAITH FOUNDATION: God’s Plan for Loving Our Siblings

God places some people in families as only children, and that’s a wonderful thing. However, a person might want to be an only child for not so wonderful reasons. It may seem impossible for preteens to love their brothers and sisters at times, but that’s what God calls them to do. Use this lesson to help kids learn how to show love to their siblings and treat them the way God calls them to.

In John 21:15-19, Jesus tested Peter’s love for him by asking Peter three times if he loved him. When Peter responded that he did, Jesus told Peter to feed and take care of his sheep. Although the “sheep” in this passage were the people of the church, this passage instructs us how to treat the people around us, especially our families. Talk about what it looks like to “feed” and care for brothers and sisters with your group. Help kids understand that loving and caring for siblings is a way to demonstrate love and obedience to God.

First Corinthians 13, commonly known as the love chapter, begins with a dramatic paragraph on the importance of love. In the first three verses, Paul emphasizes that loving motives are what make the actions good by offering examples. Paul’s point is that anything we do that’s not done in love is meaningless to God. The love Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 seeks the pleasure and good of others. It requires that, instead of pursuing pleasure for ourselves, we focus on what’s best for others—as Jesus did. This is what true love is! Use these verses to help kids see that as we become more loving and put others first, we’re becoming more like Jesus.

Have kids think of ways they can show love to their siblings. Matthew 10:16-22 describes family members killing each other, all because of their beliefs. Some conflicts might seem harmless, but God calls us to act in a loving manner no matter what others do. Discuss ways kids might’ve been hurt in the past. Have them share loving ways to respond if similar situations occur in the future.

**Understanding preteens**

Preteens are establishing and learning about their identities as they develop from children to adults. That can sometimes cause more conflicts between preteens and their siblings, as they attempt to assert their own unique identities. Teaching kids how to lovingly respond to siblings gives them tools to continue to develop those unique identities without disregarding their siblings.
### The Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Sequence</th>
<th>What Kids Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Community</strong> <em>(5 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• DVD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build relationships.</td>
<td>• snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Christian music CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Games</strong> <em>(10-15 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• classroom supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose two games to play.</td>
<td>• handkerchief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Time</strong> <em>(10 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• masking tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work together as “families” to cross an imaginary bridge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Team Time</strong> <em>(15 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• Bibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In small groups, come up with loving ways to respond to hurtful things that have happened to kids.</td>
<td>• paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• copy of the Grapple Team Guide for each person</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Team Reports</strong> <em>(10 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• Bibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report what they learned from the Bible passage they studied.</td>
<td>• paper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Prayer</strong> <em>(5 minutes)</em></td>
<td>• Bibles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose a prayer option.</td>
<td>• paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Grapple Dare</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hear the Grapple dare.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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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 group has ever had to share a bedroom with a sibling.**

2 grapple games

Say: **We’re going to play a game, but you’ll get to choose. Would you rather play Shoe Sort (p. 105), where you all try to sort yourselves by shoe size with your eyes closed? Or would you like to play Wheelbarrow Racing (p. 105), where you work with a partner to get through a classroom supply obstacle course?** 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 Back-to-Back (p. 103), where you sit back-to-back with one or more people and try to stand without letting your hands touch the ground? Or would you like to play Chase the Tail (p. 104), where you’ll all make a “dragon” and the “head” of the dragon will chase the “tail” to snatch a handkerchief?** Have kids vote on the game they’d like to play. Then lead kids in playing the game.

3 grapple time

**GET READY**

*Use masking tape to make one 4-inch x 5-foot rectangle on the floor for every two groups. Rectangles should be 4 feet apart.*

Lead the entire group in the following:

Say: **Let’s do an activity called Family Bridge. In this activity, you’ll work together with your “family” to cross a bridge.**

Form families of equal size. Have two families stand at opposite ends of each taped rectangle. Tell them that the goal is to be the first family to get all its family members across the rectangle without falling off the “bridge.” Both families will walk across the bridge at the same time and will have to try to pass each other on the bridge. If anyone falls off the bridge, that person must go to the end of the family’s line.

How successful were you at this activity? What helped or didn’t help your family succeed?

What are some things that get in the way of your own family working well together? What are some conflicts you have with
your brothers and sisters that make you wish you were an only child?

God placed some of you in your family as the only child, and that’s a wonderful thing. Others of you, though, want to be an only child for reasons that might not be so wonderful. We’re going to grapple today with why we feel that way—and how we can treasure our families instead of wanting to knock them off a bridge! Let’s grapple.

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 29-30.

Note: You’ll need to cue an activity during the Grapple Team Time, so monitor each team’s progress.

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: Brother/Sister Chant
Create a cheer (words and actions) that shows what you discovered about loving your siblings.

Option 2: Letter to a Sibling
As a team, write a letter to a sibling, explaining what you discovered. Read the letter aloud to the group.

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: Popcorn Prayers
Sit in a circle. Whenever you have a prayer of thanks or need for your family, say it out loud.
**Option 2: Hug Prayers**

Wrap your arms around yourself tightly. Close your eyes while you take time to enjoy a hug from God and listen for what God has to say about showing love to your siblings.

**Grapple Dare**

Say: **Grab one of the papers you wrote on during Grapple Team Time. Try to get all the wrinkles out of it. Pause. Impossible, isn’t it? What’s impossible for us is possible for God! We may feel it’s impossible to love our brothers and sisters at times, but that’s what God calls us to do. I dare you this week to love your brothers and sisters! I dare you to give up something for them, share something with them, agree with them instead of arguing, or do something else to love them the way God calls you to love them! I dare you to do the impossible this week!**

*(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.)*
Read John 21:15-19.

In Pairs  What did Jesus want Peter to do for his people? What do you think about doing those things for your brothers and sisters? Explain.

Take a sheet of paper. Write one thing your brothers or sisters have done to make you feel they don’t care about you. Don’t write your name on the paper. Now wad up the paper, and wait for your leader’s signal.

When your leader says “go,” throw your paper wad to another team. Keep tossing the paper wads back and forth among the teams for one minute until your leader says “stop.”

Find a paper wad for each team member to work with. Open up the papers and read them aloud.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Come up with loving things to do in response to what’s written on the paper. After you’ve written one or two loving things to do on that paper, wait for your leader’s signal. Then, on the count of three, find the original owner of your paper. You have one minute. After one minute, whether you’ve found the owner or not, return to your team.

In Pairs  How easy or difficult was it to find the paper’s original owner? How easy or difficult is it to respond to your siblings in loving ways (like those written on the papers) in real life?

Read Matthew 10:16-22.

What’s causing the families in this Scripture to act in unloving ways? Have you ever had a sibling do unloving things to you? Explain.
3. Why Can’t I Be an Only Child?

Explain whether you think it’s possible to get along with a sibling who’s being unloving?

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How do you think Jesus wants you to respond to siblings who are being unloving? Write your answer below.

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**grapple team reports**

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

**Option 1:** *Brother/Sister Chant*
Create a cheer (words and actions) that shows what you discovered about loving your siblings.

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