

How to Use the Material

The Family of God presents a total of six lessons. They are based on the principles explained by Rick Warren in *Better Together – 40 days of community*. These principles are important if you want to build a new fellowship and should ideally be used in the early months of the ministry. The material has been designed in such a way that it can be used for *oral learners*.

Each lesson details four parts. It does not present an outline, but only tells you what text to use and what is important:

Sing the Story: Please try to find something you can sing with the people (or teach them) that highlights the main point of the lesson. Music and singing is a wonderful help for people to remember what is important.

Tell the Story: This is central. We have tried to select a story that fits the topic. Of course you can use another story from the Bible if you find one that fits better. What should you be careful about? Tell the story clearly as it is in the Bible, particularly important statements. You can add descriptions of the time of Jesus, but do not add ideas that are not in the text. For example the story of Ruth: You can tell details how life used to be in Moab and Judah (if you know it), but you should not tell that the people were angry, because Ruth left (nothing in the text indicates that). Pray for God to bless His word and touch the hearts of people.

The *major points* repeat the central issues of the story. This is only there so that you understand why we use the story. You need to tell clearly everything that underlines these points so that people remember them together with the story. If for example somebody in a village asks: *Why should I become a Christian? My family will not like it if I join the church!* Then a believer can answer: *I understand what you say. This is a real problem, but let me tell you a story that has helped me...* And then you tell them about Ruth.

Discuss the Story: This part gives you three general questions. Why are they always the same? We want you to discuss with the group in a personal way what they have heard, what it means to them and how they will use it in everyday life. Please be careful: Because we ask for their personal impression there are no right or wrong answers! This is just a time to listen to one another and to what God is telling one or the other person. It may also help you for personal counselling later on and it will show you whether you told the story in such a way that the major ideas have been heard.

Emphasis: This expands a little bit on the major ideas and gives additional Bible verses. It is not an invitation to preach at the end. Let the Word of God do the preaching and then just emphasize what is important in the context of the main topic.

Others: Apart from these steps you will probably want to add two more things when you meet: Of course *you will pray* – together with the people and for their needs. At the beginning you may want to do that alone, but you can certainly encourage others to pray as well.

And you may want to discuss with the group *what steps they will take* till they meet again. Remember: It is much easier to learn something if you practice it and not just consider it theoretically! May the Lord bless you and your people!

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1 *We Belong to the Family of God*

Sing the Story:

I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel along; *<this sod>*
For I'm part of the fam'ly, the fam'ly of God.
Gloria & Bill Gaither - Sing the Lord, 681

Tell the Story:

Ruth 1:1 - 2:12

Major Points:

- Ruth decided to cast her lot with God and his people (Ruth 1:16.17).
- God promises to bless her (Ruth 2:12).

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

Life is about learning to love.
Jesus gave our love a twofold purpose (Matthew 22:37-39),
to love God and
to love our neighbours.
The easiest way to do that is together as a family.

2 *We Fellowship With the Family*

Sing the Story:

Select a chorus, song or hymn that fits and is easy to learn!

Tell the Story:

Acts 2:36-47

Major Points:

- Preaching leads people to Christ and then into fellowship with one another (Acts 2:41.42).
- Fellowship leads to glorify God and then to new people finding Christ (Acts 2:47).

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

We need each other.
All holiness is social (= lived in fellowship)
to care for one another (1 Cor 12:25.26) and
to display the presence of God (1 Cor 12:7).
God transforms those who follow him into a new family.

3 We Grow With the Family of God

Sing the Story:

Select a chorus, song or hymn that fits and is easy to learn!

Tell the Story:

Daniel 1

Major Points:

- Daniel and his friends decided to serve God no matter what the results were (Daniel 1:8.17).
- God prepares the way for people who are obedient to his principles (Daniel 1:9.17.20).

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

We all need models to help us mature.

In order to grow in our Christian faith we need
to study and obey God's principles (Psalm 119:8.11) and
we need friends to support us.

God brings people together to follow him.

4 We Worship With the Family

Sing the Story:

Select a chorus, song or hymn that fits and is easy to learn!

Tell the Story:

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Major Points:

- Jehoshaphat let the people of God to trust him alone (2 Chronicles 20:5.13).
- God acts upon their mutual praise (v.22).

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

The main purpose of life is to worship God.

Worship is not an end in itself, but in order (1 Corinthians 10:31),
to glorify God and
to win the victory over God's enemies.

God wants us celebrate him together as a family.

5 *We Reach Out With the Family*

Sing the Story:

Select a chorus, song or hymn that fits and is easy to learn!

Tell the Story:

Acts 5:41 - 6:10

Major Points:

- The Early Church realized that they can and must share responsibility in ministry (Acts 6:2-4).
- The Church grows when God's principles for ministry are being followed.

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

Love is about caring more for the needs of others than mine.

Persecution taught the early Christians

to continue reaching out to others (2 Tim 2:8-9) and
to organize ministry more effectively.

Christian love is concerned about the eternal and the day-to-day needs of the family of God and beyond.

6 *We Serve With the Family of God*

Sing the Story:

Select a chorus, song or hymn that fits and is easy to learn!

Tell the Story:

John 6:1-13

Major Points:

- Great challenges are made to glorify God and His power (John 6:6.13).
- God uses his people (little boy; disciples) to perform miracles (v.9-11).

Discuss the Story:

- What part of the story has spoken to your heart?
- What is the central idea of this story?
- How can we implement what we have heard?

Emphasis:

God loves to use you and me to serve others.

Jesus uses His family (1 Corinthians 3:7-9),

to administer the work and
to share what He provides.

The best way to serve God is doing it together as His family.