

# The Family Of God

## UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** Family of God

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:7

**Memory Verse:** The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. - 1 Samuel 16:7

## The Children's Sermon

You'll need:

- Three varieties of apples that look different; a drawing of a tree; leaf cutouts of different shapes and colors with words written on them as listed below.

(Hold up three varieties of apples that are noticeably different.) Raise your hand if you think these three apples all came from the same tree. You're right. They did not.

This Golden Delicious came from a tree where all the apples looked like this one. This Red Delicious came from a tree where they all look like it, and the same with this little Fuji apple. In nature, you would not find one tree that had all three different kinds of apples. The Bible teaches us in Genesis 1:11 that every seed will bring forth a fruit of its own kind.

Now let's think about people. Have you ever had someone say to you, "Boy, you look just like your sister, or your brother, or your mom or dad."? Who thinks they look like someone else in their family? (Call on a couple children) Or maybe you have seen a picture of your mom or dad when they were your age, and they looked back then just

like you do right now. I saw a picture of Mrs. Smith's husband when he was younger, and he looked just like their son John. I have seen Katie Trott's younger sister here at school, and I knew she was Katie's sister. Even though they are not twins, they look alike. I could tell that they were sisters.

Just like with the apples, people from the same family tree will have the same looks – the same skin color, eyes, hair, height, shape of the nose, body shape, and many other things. This happens because all these physical characteristics are passed on from one generation to another. You may have red hair and your parents don't, but maybe your grandmother or grandfather had red hair. Isn't that cool?

Now as you know, there are exceptions to the families that I have been talking about. There is a wonderful thing called adoption, where parents have a special desire to bring a child into their family who probably doesn't look physically like the other members of the family. We know that Allison has a sister Abby who was born in China. But we also know that a miracle happened for the Martin family, when they discovered that Abby's biological sister from China was also adopted and now lives in New Hampshire. How did that happen? They found Abby's sister when they saw Marie's picture on the Internet. The two girls looked so much alike, they felt Marie had to be Abby's sister. And they were right! God has a plan when He makes family members look like each other. It is just one of the ways that helps to bring you together as a family. It makes for a special connection. For Abby and Marie, their similar looks brought them together on the other side of the world from where they were born. Isn't God wonderful?

But, without being adopted, there is another kind of family tree that we can all belong to no matter what our last name is. In this family we will not all look like each other.

Which family am I talking about? -Pause- Yes, God's family. No matter what your last name is, what you look like, or what country you live in ~ you can be apart of God's Family Tree.

(Turn around easel w/ a drawing of a tree - "God's Family Tree.")

Now, let's think about something really special. Even though we all look different (different skin color, eyes, nose shape, height, and many other things), there's a way we can recognize our brothers and sisters who belong to God's family. How will we know that someone is my sister or brother through Jesus Christ? - Pause - We can recognize each other by the special things in our hearts, the things that make us act like God wants us to. These things are not about how we look. The Bible tells us in I Samuel 16:7, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." I am going to put some leaves on God's Family Tree that will show us how we can recognize each other.

Have a variety of leaf shapes, sizes, and colors with one of the following words written on each leaf: loving, caring, sharing, forgiving, love Jesus, help others, humble, praise God, pray, read the Bible, giving, and grateful spirit. (Attach each leaf to the tree as you mention them.)

When we see someone being kind, helping others, or talking about how much they love Jesus, it's like they are shining a big, bright light from their heart that says, "I'm part of God's family!"

Let's imagine you're at the playground, and you see someone who is all alone, looking sad. If you go over to them, ask if they want to play, and share your toys, you're showing

the heart characteristics of God's family. You're being loving and caring. That's how others recognize you as part of God's family, too.

Sometimes, recognizing God's family through Heart Characteristics means looking for the good in others, even when they make mistakes. If a friend accidentally breaks your toy and says sorry, and you forgive them, you're showing a heart like God's. Forgiving is a big word, but it just means not staying mad and still being friends even when something goes wrong.

So, next time you're with your friends, at school, or even at home, remember to look for those special heart characteristics. And don't forget to show them yourself! By doing so, you're not just recognizing God's family; you're being an important part of it.

## Bible Memory Verse

**The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. - 1**

### **Samuel 16:7**

You Will Need:

- Plain white t-shirts (one per child)
- Fabric markers or fabric paint
- Stencils of hearts and other shapes

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a work area that can get a little messy.
- Pre-wash the t-shirts to remove any sizing that may prevent the fabric markers or paint from adhering properly.

Do This:

1. Explain to the children that just like they are going to design the outside of their t-shirts, people often only see what is on the outside of others. But God looks at the heart, the inside, which is the most important part.
2. Have each child select a t-shirt and decide on their design. Encourage them to include at least one heart on their t-shirt to represent looking at the heart as God does.
3. As the children work on their t-shirts, engage them in a discussion about what it means to look at the heart. Ask them how they can show others that they are looking at their hearts and not just their outward appearance.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A variety of empty boxes or containers
- Decorative materials (stickers, markers, glitter, etc.)
- Blindfolds
- Bible or printed verse of Samuel 16:7

Get Ready:

- Write Samuel 16:7 on a large piece of paper or board for all to see.
- Prepare the empty boxes or containers by ensuring they are clean and safe to handle.
- Set up a decoration station with all the decorative materials spread out.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Samuel 16:7 together: "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the

things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

2. Explain that each child will have the chance to decorate an empty box. The catch is they will be doing it blindfolded. Before they start, discuss how this activity relates to the verse - we often judge based on what we see, but God looks deeper.

3. Blindfold each child in turn and guide them to the decoration station. Give them a set time (e.g., 2 minutes) to decorate their box without seeing it. After everyone has had a turn, allow them to see their boxes and discuss the experience. Highlight how our value doesn't come from our external appearance (or how well we decorate a box) but from what's inside us, just like the verse says.

## Snack Activity: Heart-Shaped Fruit Pizzas: Seeing Beyond the Surface

You'll Need:

- Whole wheat English muffins
- Cream cheese (softened)
- Honey
- Assorted fresh fruits (strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, grapes)
- Small heart-shaped cookie cutter
- Knives for spreading
- Small bowls for fruit

Get Ready: Wash all the fruits and cut them into small pieces or slices. Remember, Samuel 16:7 teaches us that the Lord looks at the heart, not the outward appearance. As you prepare the fruits, think about the qualities that make someone a good friend or family member, beyond what we see on the outside.

Do this:

1. Mix a tablespoon of honey into the cream cheese to sweeten it. This mixture represents the kindness and sweetness we should have in our hearts towards others.
2. Split the English muffins in half and use the heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out a heart from each half. These hearts remind us that God looks at what's in our hearts, not what we look like on the outside.
3. Spread the sweetened cream cheese on each heart-shaped English muffin. Then, decorate with the assorted fruits to create your own unique fruit pizza. Each piece of fruit can represent different qualities of the heart, like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
4. Share your fruit pizza with a friend or family member, and explain what each fruit represents to you. This activity is not just about making a snack, but about understanding and sharing the values that make us part of the family of God.

## Game Activity: Heart of the Matter Tag

You'll Need:

- A large open space (either outdoors or a large indoor room)
- Bandanas or small pieces of cloth (enough for half of the participants)
- A bell or noise maker

Get Ready: Before the game, discuss 1 Samuel 16:7, focusing on how God values our hearts over our outward appearance. Explain that in this game, being 'It' represents God choosing David for his heart, not his appearance. Divide the group into two teams and give one team bandanas to tuck into their pockets or waistbands.

Do this:

1. Designate one child from the team without bandanas to be 'It' and give them the bell or noise maker. This child represents Samuel, looking for the one God has chosen.
2. The children with bandanas are the 'Family of God,' representing David and his brothers. They will spread out in the play area.
3. When 'It' rings the bell or uses the noise maker, the game starts. 'It' must try to tag members of the 'Family of God.' When a player is tagged, they give their bandana to 'It' and perform a simple task (like 5 jumping jacks) to reflect on the heart's importance over appearance before rejoining the game.
4. After a set time (5-10 minutes), switch roles so everyone has a chance to be 'It.' The game emphasizes that God's choice was based on the heart, not on what was seen outside, mirroring the lesson from 1 Samuel 16:7.

## Craft Activity: Heart of the Family Tree

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers or crayons
- A large poster board
- Photos of family members or magazine cutouts to represent family members

Get Ready: Gather all materials, and cut the construction paper into heart shapes of various sizes. Each heart will represent a family member, with the size indicating their role (e.g., larger hearts for parents, medium for children, smaller for pets or extended family).

Do this:



1. Read Samuel 16:7 together, discussing how God looks at the heart rather than the outward appearance. Emphasize that in God's family, everyone is important and loved for who they are on the inside.
2. Have each child choose heart shapes to represent their family members. On each heart, they can write the name of the family member and a quality of their heart that they appreciate or admire (e.g., kindness, bravery, love).
3. Arrange and glue the hearts on the poster board to create a 'Family Tree', placing the hearts in a way that shows how everyone is connected. Decorate the tree with markers or crayons, adding details or backgrounds. Encourage creativity!
4. Once complete, each child can present their 'Heart of the Family Tree' to the class, sharing what they wrote on the hearts and how it relates to seeing people as God sees them.

## Prayer Activity: Heart Gazing Prayer

You'll Need:

- A Bible
- Blank cards or paper
- Writing and coloring materials

Get Ready: Read 1 Samuel 16:7 to understand how God values our hearts over our outward appearance. Prepare a comfortable and quiet space for the children to sit and reflect.

Do this:

1. Begin with a group discussion on 1 Samuel 16:7, focusing on how God looks at the heart rather than what is on the outside. Discuss what it means to be part of God's family and how we should view others the way God does.

2. Ask each child to think of qualities that make someone a good family member in God's eyes, focusing on inner qualities rather than physical appearances or abilities. Have them write or draw these qualities on their cards or paper.

3. Lead the children in a prayer circle, where each child can say a short prayer asking God to help them see others as God sees them, focusing on the heart. Encourage them to pray for their families, friends, and even people they find it hard to get along with, asking God to help them appreciate the inner qualities of these individuals.