



THE BIG IDEA

Not-so-typical families
pray for each other.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 13:1-13, 18:1-33, 19:27-29;
James 5:16

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Family Matters

- There are a lot of ways our families are different, but here's one thing I know for sure – all of our families have disagreements sometimes.
- Let's see how good you are at solving family disagreements.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look at the scenarios below. Spend some time reading over and thinking through // discussing what the family should do next. Then answer these questions about the scenarios you chose to talk about:*
 - **What was "atypical" about the family your group was given?**
 - **In what ways could you relate to the "atypical" family you were given?**
 - **What advice would you give the "atypical" family you discussed?**
- **TEAM 1: A Foster Family**
 - Jon and Abigail have always wanted kids, but they haven't been able to have any biological children. Because of their desire to care for kids, and the needs they know exist in their community, they decided to become foster parents.
 - Right now, they are fostering one child whose parents have been deported. Her name is Gabriela, and she is 10 years old. They also have Jake, who is 15 years old. His mother recently passed away from a long illness, and he's never met his father.
 - Gabriela is having trouble adjusting to her new foster family because she misses her parents. Jake is often angry and recently started getting in trouble at school. **What should this family do next?**
- **TEAM 2: A Blended Family**
 - Joel and Anna divorced 3 years ago – they have two kids, Ellie and Colin.
 - Last year, Joel and Anna both remarried. Joel married Khloe who has a daughter named Elise, and Anna married Ben who has a son named Marcus. Now their family has grown from two parents and two kids to four parents and four kids.
 - Ellie and Colin don't get along with Elise and are angry at their dad for getting remarried. Marcus often gives his new step-mom Anna a hard time. **What should this family do next?**
- **TEAM 3: A Single-Parent Household**



- Renee is a single mom with three kids: James, Kyle, and Jodie. She works two jobs in order to support her children.
- James, who is 17, works a job to help take care of things around the house, and also takes on the role of a father to his younger siblings.
- James is often frustrated by the fact that he has to help parent his siblings, instead of simply being a kid, and his siblings don't often see James as an authority figure. **What should this family do next?**

YOUR ATYPICAL FAMILY COULD BE EVEN MORE ATYPICAL

- When it comes to our families, who says what "typical" really is? Sometimes we let other's definitions or views of what's normal shape our view of our own families.
- But like we said last week, no matter what kind of family you come from, no family is typical.
- Your family is already "atypical," **but what if God is calling your family to be even more "atypical" than it already is?**
 - Every family has imperfections, problems, and struggles. But "typical" families either try to handle them on their own or never handle them at all.
 - "Atypical" families, on the other hand, invite God into their imperfections, problems, and struggles.
- Last week we said there is no family too simple or too complex for God to use. Your family can be used by God to do "atypical" things in the world – but how?

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

At some point, every family experiences difficulty or conflict. You might be experiencing one of those situations right now. Typical families might try to handle those situations on their own or just ignore the problems and hope they go away. But atypical families know they can't handle them on their own. **Atypical families ask for God's help.**

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 13:1-13

- Last week, we met the family of Adam and Eve – the world's very first family. We saw how their story went very wrong as a result of their choices to disobey God and hurt each other. But because of God's grace, God used their family to do something amazing: to one day bring Jesus into the world.
- Today, I want to introduce you to another family. This family lived many generations after Adam and Eve, and they were "atypical" in their own ways.
- You may have heard about Abraham before. He's an important person in the history of our faith because of an important promise God made to him. Let's learn more about Abraham's life – specifically, his relationship with his nephew, Lot.



- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Genesis 13:1-13 together.*
- Abraham and Lot were like many of our families today. They fought! In fact, they fought so much that if they had continued living near each other, they probably would have hated each other. So Abraham and Lot moved to completely different cities.

DISCUSSION

- **What's the dumbest thing your family has disagreed about recently?**
- **When you have a disagreement with a family member how do you usually fight with them? Do you scream? Give them the silent treatment? Debate? Walk away?**
- **Tell us about one big fight you've gotten into with a family member recently. How did it get resolved?**

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 18:16-33, 19:27-29

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Genesis 18:16-33 and 19:27-29 together.*
- Abraham and Lot had a long history of disagreements. Remember, they fought so much that they had to move to different cities!
- But when Abraham learned God was going to destroy Sodom (the city where Lot lived), Abraham made a choice. He pleaded with God on Lot's behalf, and in response to Abraham's prayer, Lot and his family were saved.
- Last week, we said that, if you want God to use your family to do "atypical" things, sometimes you have to be the first person in your family to do something "atypical." That's what Abraham did.
 - When you're fighting with someone in your family, it isn't typical to do what Abraham did. The typical response is to fight back, hold a grudge, or give the silent treatment.
 - But Abraham chose to do the "atypical" thing. He prayed for Lot in the middle of their conflict. He didn't wait for an apology – he reached out first through prayer.
- This might seem so simple, but it's so "atypical." **Not-so-typical families pray for each other.**



NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ATYPICAL FAMILIES PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

- Just like Abraham saw prayer change his family for the better, prayer can change your family for the better too. Every family has imperfections, problems, and struggles. But "atypical" families invite God into those situations through prayer.
- Prayer doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as . . .
 - **Thanking God** for your family (even if you're not sure you mean it at the moment).
 - **Asking God** to give you love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self control. (Remember the fruit of the Spirit from last week?)
 - **Asking God** to give you wisdom to resolve your disagreement.
 - **Asking God** to do the same for the family member you're fighting with.
 - **Thanking God** for helping your family.
- Think right now about a recent disagreement you had with a family member, or a disagreement you seem to have often. Now imagine how that conflict could be transformed if you stopped to pray, instead of fight.
 - How do you think prayer could **change your attitude, temper, or perspective?**
 - How do you think prayer could **change the person you're fighting with?**
 - How do you think prayer could begin to **change your family's pattern of behavior in the long-term?**

DISCUSSION

- **How often do you pray for each of your family members?**
- **When you pray for your family members, what do you usually pray for?**
- **How do you think prayer could help your family during a conflict?**
- **How do you think prayer could help your family when things are going well?**
- **Read James 5:16. How can we apply this verse to our families?**
- **This week, who is one family member you want to pray for regularly? Why did you choose them?**
 - **Have each person write down the name of the person they will pray for – follow up with them later in the week!**