Week 6: Jesus, the Son of God

This week we will focus on loving the family of God the way the Father loves us as his children in Christ.

Supplies:

- Opening Activity Ice Cream Sundae items (Dairy Free alternatives in parentheses) - bowls and spoons, vanilla ice cream (plus dairy free vanilla ice cream), chocolate chips or chopped candy bars (Enjoy Life DF chocolate chips), chocolate or caramel syrup (Torani DF chocolate syrup), whipped cream, additional toppings like colored sprinkles, M&Ms, berries, crushed cookies, nuts
- Tissues, music player, and Family Lesson handout (on last page) for any parents in your group

Opening Activity: As people arrive, scoop some vanilla ice cream into a bowl and invite them to make an ice cream sundae. Wait to make one sundae as a demonstration for the group once everyone is present. Read each scripture aloud and the sundae instructions for a group member to follow while you read the notes for each topping. Emphasize underlined words like "poured out," as you pour out your toppings.

1. *"Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens" (James 1:17).* **Read aloud:** As we read from Ephesians 1 about our adoption as God's children through Jesus, we're going to build ice cream sundaes to demonstrate how everything good in our lives comes down to us from our heavenly Father.
2. *"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).* **(Point to all the toppings.)** Our toppings represent the blessings God pours out on those who believe in Jesus.
3. *"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes" (v. 4).* **Put a scoop of vanilla ice cream in a bowl.** Our white scoop of ice cream represents being pure and without fault in God's eyes. Even though we have all made messes, Jesus makes us clean so that God sees us as pure and white like vanilla ice cream.
4. *"God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure" (v. 5).* **Sprinkle chocolate chips or chopped up candy bars on top.** The phrase "chip off the old block" describes someone being like their father, just like a chip of a block of chocolate would taste the same as the chocolate block. We're sprinkling chocolate chips (or candy bars) on our sundaes to remind us that God wanted lots of kids in his family who are like Jesus, a "chip off the old block." It gave him pleasure to adopt us just like it gives us pleasure to eat chocolate!
5. *"So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son" (v. 6).* **Pour chocolate or caramel syrup over the top.** We're pouring sweet syrup over our sundaes to remind us of the grace God has poured out on us because we belong to his Son.
6. *"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins" (v. 7).* **Squirt some whipped cream or other rich topping on top (more chocolate syrup if DF).** Just like whipped cream is rich and creamy, God is rich in kindness and grace.
7. *"He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding" (v. 8).* **Sprinkle lots more candies and colored sprinkles on top.** We are showering our sundaes with sweet things just like God the Father showers his kindness on us, giving us wisdom and understanding.
8. Psalm 34:8 says, *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."* **Thank God for pouring out his goodness.**

Discuss (and invite the person who just got their sundae to eat it): Is God's kindness and grace the first thing you think of when you think of the Father? If not, how does thinking about everything good in your life coming down from the Father as kindness being showered on you, like sundae toppings, change your perspective of God?

Opening Prayer: Thank you, Father, for your goodness to us, your children. Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see how the Father has loved us. Fill us with your love for our families and the family of God.

Remaining in the Word: Encourage people to have their Bible open as you read.

1. **Read Galatians 6:10.** *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*
   Discuss: Why do you think Paul emphasizes doing good to those who belong to the family of believers? Has God ever answered your prayer through another believer? (Give time for testimonies.) Why does God call the church his family and how does that change how we view one another?
2. **Read Jesus' words Luke 6:32-37 in the context of church hurt, when people don't act loving toward us.** *"If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! **33** And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! **34** And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. **35** Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. **36** You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. **37** Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven."*
   Discuss: How does showing kindness to those who are unkind both inside and outside the church make us "children of the Most High"? Why do you think Jesus tells us not to condemn others but be compassionate as our Father is compassionate? If we see God primarily as Judge, not compassionate Father, how does that impact how we treat people in the church when they make mistakes? How important is forgiveness in maintaining the bond of family love in the church and in our homes?

Worship: Play the song, "Home" by Christy Nockels. (A link can be found on the worship playlist at the bottom of the Puzzle Piece 5 page at TillingMinistries.com.) Close your eyes and picture the Father welcoming you home with delight in his eyes as you listen. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how the Father sees you as a little child.

Closing Prayer: In groups of three, ask the Holy Spirit to show you a picture of how the Father views the other two people in your group as his little children. Share prayer requests and listen for the compassionate heart of the Father as you pray for one another and share whatever picture the Holy Spirit gives you.

Optional Handout for Families: Print off copies of the 2-page handout below to give to parents in your group who would like to teach their children about the Father's love with a fun family night!

Son of God Family Lesson

Learn about the grace and kindness that God the Father pours out on his children who are in Christ.

Bible Verse: Galatians 3:26. *"You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus."*

Supplies: Bowls and spoons, vanilla ice cream (or dairy free vanilla ice cream), chocolate chips or chopped candy bars (or Enjoy Life DF chocolate chips), chocolate or caramel syrup (Torani chocolate syrup is DF), whipped cream (Trader Joe's sometimes carries DF canned whipped cream), more toppings like M&Ms, colored sprinkles, berries, nuts, crushed cookies, etc.

Activity 1: Make ice cream sundaes! Set out all the supplies before you begin. Read each scripture before adding items to your bowl, emphasizing the underlined words like "poured out," then read the following explanation of what each item represents. Older children can follow directions as you read aloud and make their own sundaes while you demonstrate on your own sundae or make one for a child.

1. ***"Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens" (James 1:17).*** **Read aloud:** As we read from Ephesians 1 about our adoption as God's children through Jesus, we're going to build ice cream sundaes to demonstrate how everything good in our lives comes down to us from our heavenly Father. (Set out a bowl and spoon for each person.)
2. *"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).* **Point to all the toppings.** Our toppings represent the blessings God pours out on those who believe in Jesus.
3. *"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes" (v. 4).* **Put a scoop of vanilla ice cream in a bowl for each person.** Our white scoop of ice cream represents being pure and without fault in God's eyes. Even though we have all made messes, Jesus makes us clean so that God sees us as pure and white like vanilla ice cream.
4. *"God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure" (v. 5).* **Sprinkle chocolate chips or chopped up candy bars on top.** The phrase "chip off the old block" describes someone being like their father, just like a chip of a block of chocolate would taste the same as the chocolate block. We're sprinkling chocolate chips (or candy bars) on our sundaes to remind us that God wanted lots of kids in his family who are like Jesus, a "chip off the old block." It gave him pleasure to adopt us just like it gives us pleasure to eat chocolate!
5. *"So we praise God for the glorious grace he has <u>poured out</u> on us who belong to his dear Son" (v. 6).* **Pour chocolate or caramel syrup over the top.** We're pouring sweet syrup over our sundaes to remind us of the grace God has poured out on us because we belong to his Son.
6. *"He is so <u>rich in kindness and grace</u> that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins" (v. 7).* **Squirt some whipped cream or other rich topping on your sundae.** Just like whipped cream is rich and creamy, God is rich in kindness and grace.
7. *"He has <u>showered his kindness on us</u>, along with all wisdom and understanding" (v. 8).* **Sprinkle lots more candies and/or nuts on top.** We are showering our sundaes with sweet things just like God the Father showers his kindness on us, giving us wisdom and understanding.
8. Psalm 34:8 says, *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."* **As we enjoy eating our sundaes, let's take turns sharing something good God has poured out to us and give thanks to our heavenly Father.**

Activity 2: HIDE AND SEEK WITH THE FATHER. In Jeremiah 29:13 our heavenly Father says, *"'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' says the LORD."*

Instructions: Have someone in your family hide somewhere in the house, representing God the Father, then play hide and seek. If the one hiding is not found quickly, make a little noise to send the seekers your way. Take turns being the one to hide until everyone has had a turn.

Discuss: Was it more fun to seek or to be found? God wants us to seek him with all our heart because it brings him delight to be found. God invites us to seek him because he knows we delight in discovery. When we seek God by reading the Bible, we find him! When we seek the Father in prayer, we find his presence because he has made his home in our hearts.