

EXPLICIT

M O V E M E N T

Post Conference Lesson: The Father's Heart

OBJECTIVES

What do you want the youth to KNOW?

- Understand God's Father Heart of Love towards His children.
- Recognize some ways in which they may view Father God inaccurately due to their experiences with their earthly father.

What do you want the youth to FEEL? Loved, valued, and affirmed by God and others.

What do you want the youth to DO?

- Receive the Father's love in a deeper way into their hearts and embrace the Spirit of adoption.

MATERIALS

- White board/chart paper and marker
- YouTube Video: LeLiLu Videos. (2015, June 1). *Fatherless to Fatherfull (Father's Day Video)* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/L3dyJ3govp0>
- YouTube Video: Dan Loewen. (2016, May 25). *Father's Day Mini Movie - 'Foster Kid Father's Day'* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/gP1R9ZmrCwo>
- Dark glasses
- Take Home Sheet of verses to meditate on throughout the week (can copy 2-sided)
- Play song, *Reckless Love of God* by Cory Asbury and/or "Good, Good Father" by Chris Tomlin

BIBLE TRUTH FOCUS

(Psalm 8:14-17, TPT) "And you did not receive the "spirit of religious duty," leading you back into the fear of *never being good enough*. But you have received the "Spirit of full acceptance," enfolding you into the family of God. And you will never feel orphaned, for as he rises up within us, our spirits join him in saying the words of tender affection, "Beloved Father!" For the Holy Spirit makes God's fatherhood real to us as he whispers into our innermost being, "You are God's beloved child!"

(I John 3:1, TPT) "Look with wonder at the depth of the Father's marvelous love that he has lavished on us! He has called us and made us his very own *beloved* children."

(Romans 8:19, TPT) "The entire universe is standing on tiptoe, yearning to see the unveiling of God's *glorious* sons and daughters!"

OPENER ACTIVITY

- 1) Explain how in our heart of hearts, we want to be loved, valued and treasured by our parents. Jesus died so we could be connected in an intimate, real relationship to our Heavenly Father.

On a white board or chart paper, have the youth brainstorm words to describe (traits and adjectives) the ideal, perfect father such as mentor, loving etc. As a variation, you can break up the youth group into smaller groups and have them brainstorm together first, then as a large group, create a master list.

- 2) Secondly, on the white board, have the youth brainstorm words to describe negative characteristics of fathers in this world – like abusive, absent, etc. (or you can have youth brainstorm again in small groups first before compiling a master list).
- 3) As group, compare the two compiled lists. Affirm the fact that everyone in here can relate to certain characteristics of our earthly dads on each list in varying degrees. Note that no father is perfect and we are called to honor our fathers despite their imperfections.
- 4) Discuss how our experience, whether good or bad with our earthly fathers, can directly affect our relationship with our heavenly father. The most influential grid for a 'father' is our earthly father.

Put on the dark glasses. Explain that our experiences with our fathers can easily shade our view of God just as the dark glasses shade our view of what we look at when we put them on. If your earthly father is emotionally distant, you may find it hard to emotionally connect with Father God and believe in your heart that he passionately is interested in you. If you have a father who fails to provide material needs for you, it can be very challenging to trust God to provide financially for your needs. If you have a father who is angry all the time, you can easily think God is ready to blast you or reject you whenever you mess up! And visa versa – if you have a father who delights in you, you will probably have an easy time believing God delights in you.

- 5) Discuss how our earthly fathers only do the best with what they have – and are often affected by how they were raised. God wants to heal our hearts regarding any hurts we may have with our earthly fathers through a process of forgiveness so we can honor them sincerely. He wants to reveal to us the truth of who He is as your perfect Father!
- 6) Introduce the video(s): (You can show both videos or just one as you see fit.) Share how once a year in America, we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day. Actually in many ways, fathers and mothers together more completely represent who God is, since he created male and female in his image, but because our heavenly Father is a masculine figure, we relate to God as a father. Let's watch this video(s) celebrating Father's Day and see how the Lord speaks to you.

SHOW VIDEO Fatherless to Fatherfull and/or Foster Kid Father's Day.

- 7) Have the youth group share take-aways from the video as large group or in small groups. What stood out or was triggered in them?

Have them share and discuss their view of God our Father. (You can mention that many people say they relate easier to Jesus – Jesus takes the role of ‘older brother’ to us, yet Jesus came to show us the Father).

LEADER’S TALK POINTS

- 1) If possible, share a vulnerable personal testimony from your life that illustrates a point you want to highlight to encourage the youth regarding the Father’s love (you can even relate it to your earthly father experience. Being vulnerable helps create a safe place for deeper sharing.)
- 2) Discuss with the youth that experiencing and knowing God’s love for you, who He is for you and how He wants to bless you tremendously, has a powerful impact on how we walk out our sexual integrity and make choices. When we begin to realize the great value He places upon us and His gift of purity, we will be motivated to safe-guard and protect His gift to us! A foundation to the WHY behind sexual integrity begins with our relationship with our Father in Heaven and encountering His love that heals, restores and frees us from shame!
- 3) Discuss how there is so much hope in God and that they will discover a rich inheritance of power and wisdom. We will also discover the endless supply of God’s immense love as He teaches us how to love as He loves. We can experience restoration and healing in our relationships.
- 4) Healing begins with being restored in a relationship with your Heavenly Father, which usually involves removing the broken ‘Father filter’, which is seeing God in the same way you experienced your earthly father. God wants you to see Him as who He truly is, not through the shaded lens of your earthly father (even if your father is a great dad for which you are thankful – no human is perfect). One facet of God is a loving Father who lavishes his love on His children.

One way He loves each of us is by giving us a new identity. He wants to free us from our fears and doubts so we will learn to rest in His Presence and enjoy an intimate friendship with Him.

- 5) Read the scripture verses provided in the Bible Truth section (or you can focus on one or two).
- 6) Being restored to a loving relationship with Father God will lay a firm foundation for a loving, healthy family and future family that reflects God’s glory and light to a dark world.
- 7) You can close this session by everyone singing to “Reckless Love of God” or “Good, Good Father” or the youth can close their eyes and soak in the words and melody.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Share how you believe your earthly father views you.

Share how you view your earthly father.

If you have an earthly father, has he provided for your needs? If so, in what ways has he provided for you? How does your Father God provide for your needs?

If you were deeply grounded in the depth of God’s love, believing you are a Chosen Beloved Child of His in your heart, how would this affect your choices in living a life of purity/sexual integrity?

How would you live differently if you were completely secure in God's love?

PRAYER POINTS

Have the youth pray for one another's view of Father God – that it may become more and more accurate not only in their minds, but in their hearts.

Pray for each person's relationship with their earthly father - that it would continue to grow positively.

Pray for God to also provide great spiritual father figures in each of the youth's lives.

Have them pray for each other for more tangible encounters with the Father's heart of love for him/her.

FOLLOW UP

God wants you to know Him for who He really is. Invite the Lord to show you His true nature towards you and ask Him to help you grow in intimacy with Him. Have the youth take home the sheet as a reference for meditation throughout the week.

Have the youth follow the Bible Verse handout for the coming week. Encourage the youth to journal their personal reflections each day.

Encounter The Father's Heart for You This Week!

MONDAY | (Psalm 8:14-17, TPT) "And you did not receive the "spirit of religious duty," leading you back into the fear of *never being good enough*. But you have received the "Spirit of full acceptance," enfolding you into the family of God. And you will never feel orphaned, for as he rises up within us, our spirits join him in saying the words of tender affection, "Beloved Father!" For the Holy Spirit makes God's fatherhood real to us as he whispers into our innermost being, "You are God's beloved child!"

TUESDAY | (Ephesians 1:4-7, TPT) "But God still loved us with such great love. He is so rich in compassion and mercy. Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace! He raised us up with Christ the exalted One, *and we ascended with him into the glorious perfection and authority* of the heavenly realm, for we are now co-seated as one with Christ! Throughout the coming ages we will be the visible display of the infinite, limitless riches of his grace and kindness, which was showered upon us in Jesus Christ."

WEDNESDAY | (Ephesians 2:8-10, TPT) "For it was only through this wonderful grace that we believed in him. Nothing we did could ever earn this salvation, for it was the gracious gift from God that brought us to Christ! So no one will ever be able to boast, for salvation is never a reward for good works or human striving. We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance *our destiny* and the good works^{lb} we would *do to fulfill it!*

THURSDAY | (Zephaniah 3:17. NKJV)

"The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."

FRIDAY | (Psalm 139:1-6, 17-18, TPT)

Lord, you know everything there is to know about me.
You perceive every movement of my heart and soul,
and you understand my every thought before it even enters my mind.
You are so intimately aware of me, Lord.
You read my heart like an open book
and you know all the words I'm about to speak
before I even start a sentence!
You know every step I will take before my journey even begins.

You've gone into my future to prepare the way,
and in kindness you follow behind me
to spare me from the harm of my past.
With your hand of love upon my life,
you impart a blessing to me.
This is just too wonderful, deep, and incomprehensible!
Your understanding of me brings me wonder and strength.
Every single moment you are thinking of me!
How precious and wonderful to consider
that you cherish me constantly in your every thought!
O God, your desires toward me are more
than the grains of sand on every shore!
When I awake each morning, you're still with me.

SATURDAY | 2 Corinthians 6:18, TPT

"I will be a true Father to you, and you will be my beloved sons and daughters,"
says the Lord Yahweh Almighty."