



Activity Ideas for Family Issues



Note: These activities support the sessions 'Ishmael – Unwanted Child?'; 'Who's up Your Family Tree?'; 'Parents Who'd Have Them!' and other similar topics.

Sticker game – who am I?

Give everyone a post-it note. Tell them to write on it the name of a real or fictional character and stick it on the forehead of the person next to them. Everyone then takes it in turns to ask a question to which the group will give a yes or no answer. They might ask 'Am I male?' 'Am I a real person?' and so on until they have guessed who they are.

Guess the celebrity

Someone in the group pretends to be a celebrity & the others ask yes or no question to find out who they are. This is similar to the sticker game but the other way around.

'Mom' songs

The Anita Renfroe version of the William Tell Overture is very funny. It can be found on YouTube. 3:12 minutes

There is also a 'Mom' version of 'Let it go' from frozen, 3:37 minutes

World's Toughest Job: Mom job description

I first encountered this as an e-mail circular, but it was written by Annette Clifford who has now published a collection of her writings on family life in 'World's Toughest Job'.

<http://www.worldstoughestjob.com/Writings.html> or search Google under 'Mom job description'.

I usually read the job description to the group and ask them to guess which job it describes. It helps them to think about someone else's point of view.

Interview

Interview someone who is a parent. Ask questions such as ...

- How did you feel about becoming a parent?
- Was it different to how you expected?
- What is difficult about being a parent?
- What is nice about being a parent?

This will need to be planned carefully beforehand. Try to include some humour.

Guess the celebrity couple

Make up a game giving a selection of famous people who are related to one another. The group has to pair up the names. They need to be people the group will have heard of so the game needs to be adjusted according to the group. They could be parent/ child; grandparent/ grandchild; uncle/ niece; husband/wife etc. You could use fictional characters as well as real ones if you wished e.g. Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker or even Peter Rabbit and Cottontail!

Family connections stories

When I was at school, a class mate was talking to an older friend one lunch time about a teacher she really did not like. She did not notice when her friend became uncomfortable with the conversation. She still did not notice when her friend tried to point out what her surname was! Finally her friend had to say “You’re talking about my Mum!” It was rather embarrassing for both of them.

One evening I was driving the minibus for the local youth group. One of the girls seemed very surprised to see me as the driver. I think she thought that only men drove minibuses! We usually have “the man with the fluffy hair”, she said. “That’s her husband” commented her friend. We all thought it was funny but she was a little embarrassed.

Invite other similar stories.

Bible Parents

Can you think of a parent (or parents) in the Bible who...?

1. Embarrassed his children
2. Was extremely unfair and showed great favouritism towards one son
3. Threw his son out ‘onto the street’
4. Gave her son up to be fostered
5. Never corrected his sons despite being a very spiritual man/king
6. Was a very godly king but whose son was the exact opposite
7. Had a misunderstanding with her son and blamed him for it.

Clues to the above for groups who are happy to look up Bible verses

1. Genesis 9:20-23
2. Genesis 37:3-4
3. Genesis 21:9-14
4. 1 Samuel 1:22
5. 1 Samuel 3:12-13 and 1 Kings 1:6
6. 2 Kings 18:5; 21:1-2
7. Luke 2:48-49

Alternatively display these names and ask “which of these embarrassed his sons” etc. you may need to give other clues.

- Noah
- Jacob
- Abraham
- Hannah
- David
- Hezekiah
- Mary

Does anyone have any relatives who ...?

You could pick one idea from the list below to use as a light-hearted starter by asking them to share a funny story. Alternatively you could use the ideas to have a more serious discussion in a small group later in the session. You may need to be sensitive with this.

Does anyone have any relatives who

- a) Embarrass them
- b) Drive them up the wall
- c) They wish didn't exist
- d) They don't know if they exist!
- e) They feel ashamed of
- f) They don't know how to handle

My Family Shield

Every family has some negative/sad history events as well as some positive. Children can create a shield which will represent their family - taking into consideration both bad and good events. First, they can write down some features they want to be present on their family shield and then they can use different paper-colours, magazines, etc., to create their family shield. In discussion they can present their shields to others in the group, pointing out maybe only one feature they want to share. At the beginning or conclusion, the leader can show that is important to be aware of some weaknesses each family have, so we can learn from our own history and do better in the future.

A Flag of

Encourage them to discover more about some members of their family. Perhaps draw up a questionnaire they could use to dig out some of those interesting stories. Most people have something to tell that would surprise us if we just ask the right questions and listen. Either at home or the following week they can choose one person and create a flag which will represent the person and her/his character and actions. Allow time for them to show & explain their flags. This may create a few topics for a prayer time and worship.

Who are you?

Think of something about yourself that will never change.

What would you like people to say about you in say 50 years time or after you're dead.

Birth certificates

You could use this idea with them either for themselves or a relative or a Bible character. Try to have a real birth certificate to show them.

Birth Certificate	
Name	
Date of birth	
Place of Birth	
Father's name	
Father's occupation	
Mother's name & maiden name	
Mother's occupation	

Draw a Family Tree

Aim: To look at our good and not such good qualities and to see if these qualities exist in any other family member. Identify what qualities we want to grow/axe.

Materials: Paper and pens

Draw your family tree in the shape of a tree.

Write your name on the trunk, brothers and sisters as branches coming out of the trunk, mum and dad as main branches reaching upwards, their brothers and sisters (your uncles and aunts coming out of their branch and lastly your granddad and grandmother as branches reaching upwards out of dad or mum’s branches.

