

Unit 2

Created to Live in a Fam-

- Lesson 1: Living and Nonliving Things
- Lesson 2: Living Things Reproduce
- Lesson 3: Living in Families
- Lesson 4: All Kinds of Families
- Lesson 5: Change and Families
- Lesson 6: The Life Cycle and Death
- Lesson 7: Dealing with Death
- Lesson 8: Belonging to the Family of God

Goals

- Students will recognize God's design for the continuation of life.
- Students will develop their understanding of family life—its purpose, responsibilities, and common changes.
- Students will understand the life cycle.
- Students will develop a Christian perspective on death.

Background

God created us to live in relationship with others. Genesis 2 pictures God the Creator thinking over Adam's relationships and deciding that Adam needed another human being with whom to share his life. "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (verse 18). Marriage and, by extension, the family are part of a loving God's plan for human life. The Scriptures affirm this throughout (see, for example, Psalm 127: 3-4). The idea that marriage is a good gift is highlighted by the frequent use in Scripture of marriage as a metaphor of God's relationship to his people (Hosea 1-4, Isaiah 54:4-6, Mark 2:19-20, Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19:7-9).

But marriage and family life have not escaped the effects of sin. Because we are sinful, we have no power within ourselves to maintain healthy family relationships. Our brokenness is reflected in family life. But in Christ we can find healing, forgiveness, and the power to restore relationships and make new beginnings.

With this Christian perspective in mind, how do we teach a unit on the family? As Christians we want to celebrate the joy of God's good gift of family, but we also must recognize the existence of common family struggles. Our homes are not trouble free, and glossing over the effects of sin is not helpful to our students. The Bible is brutally honest in its picture of family life. Think of the stories about the families of Jacob, David, and Solomon. Teaching the unit in a moralistic way will only serve to make students who live in troubled families feel guilty. God is present in both troubled and tranquil families. The good news is that God came to sinners, to all those with broken and contrite hearts.

Vocabulary

Integrate the following suggested vocabulary:

living	babies	mother	church	grandfather
nonliving	kinds	father	people	grandmother
plants	cousin	change	brother	praise
animals	aunt	death	sister	group
seeds	uncle	worship	serve	home
eggs	home	love	family	change

Unit Resources (Search online for similar resources if these are no longer available)

Anderson, Ray S., and Dennis B. Guernsey. *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

Written by two Fuller Seminary professors, the book's central thesis is that "God has placed human persons in a created order for which the covenant love of God provides the fundamental paradigm" for the formation of family life.

Canadian Families: Media Kit. Kanata Series (redeveloped). Weigl Educational Publishers, 1984.

The kit features five Canadian families of various ethnic roots: Jamaican, Ukrainian, Japanese, Native, and French Canadian. Students learn about similarities and differences in the ways the families live. The kit includes posters, an audiocassette, and a teacher guide.

Greene, Carol. *Why Boys and Girls Are Different*. Learning About Sex Series. St. Louis: Concordia, 1982.

Written from a solid Christian perspective for ages 3-5, the book covers differences between boys and girls (uses the words *vagina* and *penis*). It also talks about different kinds of families and places the Christian family within the context of God's family. An excellent resource for this unit; however, the art gives the impression of embarrassment with the subject (everyone has large eyes and sheepish expressions).

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991.

Humorous and serious poems celebrating every kind of family member.

Hart, Carole, and others, eds. *Free to Be ... You and Me*. Toronto/New York: Bantam, 1972.

A collection of poems, stories, and songs that attempt to break down stereotypes and promote self-esteem.

My Family and Me. Media kit. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1981.

The kit consists of four filmstrips with accompanying audio cassettes entitled What Is a Family? How Do We Help Each Other? What Are Family Rules? and How Do Families Change? A teacher guide contains a summary of the content, questions for discussion, and suggestions for student activities.

Lesson Resources (Search online for similar resources if these are no longer available)

Lesson 2

Babies of the Home. Videocassette. Available from Kimbo.

Shows small puppies, kittens with eyes still closed, and a tiny parakeet pecking its way out of the egg. For ages 3-10. Running time of 45 minutes.

Barnyard Babies. Videocassette. Available from Kimbo.

Shows babies taking their first steps and mothers cleaning, feeding, and caring for their babies. For ages 3-10. Running time of 45 minutes.

Brown, Margaret W. *Baby Animals*. Reprint of 1941 edition. New York: Random, 1989.

Carle, Eric. *The Tiny Seed*. Saxonville, Mass.: Picture Book Studio, 1987.

Fisher, Aileen. *Listen, Rabbit*. New York: Crowell, 1964.

Freedman, Russell. *Farm Babies*. New York: Holiday, 1981.

Heller, Ruth. *Animals Born Alive and Well*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1982.

_____. *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones*. A Reading Rainbow Book. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1981.

Merriam, Eve. *Boys & Girls, Girls & Boys*. New York: Holt, 1972.

Penny, Malcolm. *Animals and Their Young*. Animal Kingdom Series. New York: Watts, 1987.
Intended for grades 1-6.

Selsam, Millicent. *All Kinds of Babies*. New York: Harper, 1963.

_____. *Egg to Chick*. Revised edition. New York: HarperCollins, 1987.

Lessons 3 and 4

Billy's World. Native Education Series. Reidmore Books, 1989.

Set in the Northlands of Alberta, this story tells of a boy who goes on a trip with his grandfather and finds peace and a sense of completeness in the bush.

Dantzer-Rosenthal, Marya. *Some Things Are Different, Some Things Are the Same*. Niles, Ill., Whitman, 1986.

Compares the homes and families of two friends.

Goffstein, Marilyn. *Family Scrapbook*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1978.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A House Is a House for Me*. New York: Viking, 1978.

Rosen, Michael. *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. New York: McElderry, 1989.

Simon, Norma. *All Kinds of Families*. Niles, Ill.: Whitman, 1975.

Vendrell, Carme, and J.M. Parramón. *Family: Parents*. Educational Series. Toronto/New York: Barron's, 1987.

About the role of parents in raising and caring for children and about how feelings of a child can affect a parent.

_____. *Family: Grandparents*. Educational Series. Toronto/New York: Barron's, 1987.

About the place of grandparents in the family.

Williams, Vera. *A Choice for My Mother*. New York: Greenwillow, 1982.

Lesson 5

Blaine, Marge. *The Terrible Thing That Happened at Our House*. Reprint of 1975 edition. New York: Four Winds, 1984.

Changing Homes. Canadian Family Series. Post Mills, Vt.: Chelsea Green/Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1986.

Three children—Gretchen, Sandy, and Joey—from two different families learn to live together as a family when their parents get married.

Henkes, Kevin. *Julius: Baby of the World*. New York: Greenwillow, 1990.

Hoban, Russell. *A Baby Sister for Frances*. New York: Harper, 1964.

Keats, Ezra. *Peter's Chair*. New York: Harper, 1967.

Lesson 6

Brown, Margaret Wise. *The Dead Bird*. Reprint of 1958 edition. New York: HarperCollins, 1989.

Cohen, Miriam. *Jim's Dog Muffins*. New York: Greenwillow, 1984.

Keller, Holly. *Goodbye, Max*. New York: Greenwillow, 1984.

Kopp Ruth. *Where Has Grandpa Gone?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

Written from a Christian perspective, this teacher resource describes how a child perceives death at various age levels and gives suggestions for guiding children through times of loss. Includes a read-aloud section to help explain the meaning of death to children.

Sanford, Doris. *It Must Hurt a Lot: A Child's Book About Death*. Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1986.

Stock, Catherine. *Better With Two*. New York: Harper, 1988.

Wahl, Mats. *Grandfather's Laika*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1990

A grandfather and grandson work through their grief together when Laika, a much-loved golden retriever, becomes sick and dies.

Lesson 7

The following is a list of student resources (K-2):

Books dealing with moving and change or loss

Aliki. *We Are Best Friends*. New York: Greenwillow, 1982.

Hickman, Martha. *My Friend William Moved Away*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.

Hughes, Shirley. *Moving Molly*. New York: Lothrop, 1988.

Sharmat, Marjorie. *Mitchell Is Moving*. Reading Rainbow Book. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Waber, Bernard. *Ira Says Goodbye*. Boston: Houghton, 1988.

Zolotow, Charlotte. *Janey*. New York: Harper, 1973.

Books dealing with human death

Clifton, Lucille. *Everett Anderson's Goodbye*. New York: Holt, 1983.

Everett grieves for his dead father. The book begins with a list of the five stages of grieving and then follows Everett through each stage of grief.

dePaola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs*. New York: Puffin, 1973.

Egger, Bettina. *Marianne's Grandmother*. New York: Dutton, 1987.

Gould, Deborah. *Grandpa's Slide Show*. New York: Lothrop, 1987.

Kaldhol, Marit, and Wenche Oyen. *Goodbye Rune*. New York: Kane/Miller, 1987.

Cohn, Janice. *I Had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to Children About Death*. New York: Morrow, 1987.

LESSON 1: LIVING AND NONLIVING THINGS

Preparation/Materials

- Picture(s) showing living and nonliving things. Include pictures of plants, animals, and people.
- Student Activity page

Objectives

- Students will distinguish between living and nonliving things.
- Students will classify three kinds of living things: plants, animals, and human beings.



Lesson

1. Briefly review the concept of alike/different taught in Lesson 2 of Unit 1. Tell students that one way people are all alike is that they are alive.
2. Display the pictures and have students identify the living and nonliving things depicted. Teach *living* and *nonliving* as new vocabulary. Elicit from students that living things move and grow and that nonliving things don't. (A later lesson discusses what living things need to grow.)

Have students study the pictures of living things carefully. Lead students to identify three kinds of living things: plants, animals, and people. Teach new vocabulary. Together classify the pictures. Then have students decide which category they belong in.

3. **Student activity.** Have students complete the activity page, drawing a blue circle around the pictures of things that are alive and a red circle around the pictures of things that are not alive. As you discuss the pictures, talk about how the living things are alike (they move and grow). Lead students to understand that God gives life and sustains it.
4. **Closure.** Ask questions such as the following:
 - "What is the main difference between living and nonliving things?"
 - "Name a nonliving thing."
 - "Name a living thing."
 - "What are you—living or nonliving?"
 - "Who gives you life?"



Related Activities

1. At a center make mobiles of pictures of living things. Have students draw the pictures or cut them out of magazines. Direct class members to mount the pictures on construction paper and then punch a hole in the top of each. Use yarn to hang the pictures from a dowel or coat hanger.
2. Another center idea: provide sets of pictures of living and nonliving things and/or of plants, animals, and people for students to classify.

LESSON 2: LIVING THINGS REPRODUCE

Preparation/Materials

- Student Activity pages or picture illustrating living/nonliving things from previous lesson
- A few seeds and an egg
- Pictures depicting living things and their young: plants and seeds; birds, poultry, or reptiles and their eggs; cats, dogs, cows, and their young; human parents and baby
- Student Activities 1 & 2
- Optional but highly recommended: seeds to plant, soil, and containers; a hamster, gerbil, or another small animal and its young to observe over a period of time in the classroom; or eggs to hatch

Background

The concept of reproduction may be totally new to many students. Teach the lesson in a way that communicates that reproduction is a normal part of life. Children at this age are often curious about animal reproduction and the interaction of animal parents with their young, so this is a good age at which introduce the basic facts of reproduction. Be prepared to answer students' questions in an honest, straightforward way. But beyond that use this lesson as an opportunity to instill wonder at God's intricate plan for the continuation of life.

Objectives

- Students will understand that living things reproduce themselves through eggs or seeds.
- Students will be aware that human beings grow inside a mother's body and are born alive.
- Students will be aware that God planned for the continuation of life in this way.

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Lesson

1. Use a visual or a copy of the Student Activity pictures of the previous lesson to review the concept of living and nonliving.
2. Show students the seeds and eggs. Explain that this is the way living things start. Plants start as little seeds, and then sprout and grow; other living things start as eggs.
3. Display the pictures of plants and seeds and of animals and humans and their young. Explain that some animals grow in eggs outside of the mother's body. Describe how birds or chickens keep the eggs warm in a nest until the little ones peck their way out. Then tell students that some living things are born alive from their mothers. Kittens, puppies, and human babies are all born this last way. These mothers keep the babies warm inside of them until it is time to be born. Emphasize that God planned for life to continue on earth in this way.

4. Teach the song “Animal Families.” Contrast human families and animal families.
5. Start a class project on reproduction. Plant the seeds, get acquainted with the animal and its young, and/or explain the egg-hatching procedure.
6. **Student activity.** Have students cut out pictures of the young and paste them in the correct “parent picture.” Go over the completed activity with the class. Ask whether the things pictured are living or nonliving. Have class members identify which of the young pictured grow inside the mother’s body and which are from eggs outside of the mother’s body.
7. **Closure.** “Today we talked about living things. God’s plan for this world includes a way for new living things to start or to be born.” (Elicit from class members the way living things start.)



Related Activities

1. Read books on the lesson topic. Some suggested titles:
 - Baby Animals* by Margaret Wise Brown
 - Farm Babies* by Russell Freedman
 - Animals and Their Young* by Malcolm Penny
 - The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
 - Listen, Rabbit* by Aileen Fisher
 - All Kinds of Babies* and *Egg to Chick* by Millicent Selsam
 - Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* and *Animals Born Alive and Well* by Ruth Heller.
2. Make a class booklet illustrating the song “Animal Families” and an audio recording of the class singing the song. Put the booklet and recording at a center for students to enjoy.

Animal Families

L.,H.B.

Lois and Herb Brokeri

The tur - tie's home is on his back. He does - n't know his
 The ba - by cat is short and fat. He sucks milk from his
 The but - ter - fly will lay an egg. Out comes a cat - er -
 Some - one to love and take good care is what God planned for

moth - er. He eats what - ev - er comes a - long and
 moth - er. She cleans him with her rough, pink tongue, and
 pil - lar. She eats some leaves, then eats some more. It
 me. Moth - er, fath - er, aunt, or grand - ma.

then he eats an - oth - er. That's the way God made him.
 then she cleans his broth - er. That's the way God made her.
 Guess who it can be? That's the way God made me.

That's the way God made him. That's the way God made him, but
 That's the way God made her. That's the way God made her, but
 That's the way God made me. That's the way God made me, that's

he is not like me.
 she is not like me.
 how I like to be.

LESSON 3: LIVING IN FAMILIES

Preparation/Materials

- For student booklets:
drawing paper
art materials
- Optional: write the poem on chart paper.

Objectives

- Students will recognize that God's plan for humans includes living in families.
- Students will identify their parents' responsibility to love and care for them, but also to discipline them.

Background

"God established marriage and, by extension, the family as a cornerstone of creation," says *Horizons Health's* statement of philosophy. This lesson teaches students that families are part of God's loving design for the human race and makes them aware of the blessings of family life.

However, in this lesson students will talk not only about the warmth of family life but also touch on its tensions and frictions. People of all ages experience swings in mood from day to day. It is important that students learn that relationships with others, especially with family members, can affect their feelings. Also they need to learn that they can affect the feelings of their family members—that is, the ways in which they interact with other family members can affect the moods of their siblings and parents. Children need reassurance that family friction does not mean that family members don't love each other. And they need to know that in Christ they can find healing for broken relationships and hurts, forgiveness, and the power to make new beginnings. By relying on God's grace and asking for the Spirit's power, families can experience joy.

Lesson

1. Begin by reading the following poem about home by Jack Prelutsky. If you have written the poem on chart paper, display and read from the chart.

Home! You're Where It's Warm Inside

Home! You are a special place;
you're where I wake and wash my face,
brush my teeth and comb my hair,
change my socks and underwear,
clean my ears and blow my nose,
try on all my parents' clothes.

Home! You're where it's warm inside,
where my tears are gently dried,
where I'm comforted and fed,
where I'm forced to go to bed,
where there's always love to spare;
Home! I'm glad that you are there.

2. Discuss the poem. Emphasize that living in families is God's plan for us. Ask students why this is necessary. (The adults in the family provide for the children.)

Lead students to identify ways their parents care for them (love, feed, and clothe them; provide shelter; take care of them when they're sick; help them in many ways; teach them about serving God). Make an experience chart with the class or list on the board ways parents provide.

Use the poem line "where I'm forced to go to bed" to comment on discipline and obedience as a necessary part of family life. And refer to the line "where my tears are gently dried" to point out that sometimes we are unhappy at home, too. Sometimes family members may hurt their feelings or they may do or say something that upsets others. Talk about forgiveness and new beginnings in family life.

Tell students that although parents are important in families, so are children. Children can help their parents, and in families with more than one child, children can also help each other.

Identify things that families do together such as working, talking, eating, and playing. Christian families also pray, read the Bible, and praise God together. (The following lesson will identify specific things children can do to help in their families.)

3. Have students illustrate the poem "Home! You're Where It's Warm Inside." Consider making a class booklet about the poem and dividing the lines to be illustrated among the students. (Suggestion: make the book in the shape of a house.) If the class is large, assign several students to illustrate each line. Write the line on the bottom of the first of the illustrations. As you read the completed book with the class, have class members identify which of the basic needs the poem refers to. Which of the needs is not mentioned in the poem?

Keep the completed book in the book center for students to read. If the book will receive hard use, you may wish to have the pages laminated.

4. **Closure.** "God planned for people to live in families. Why is that a good plan?" (Refer students to the experience chart.)

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Related Activities

1. Read *A House Is a House for Me* by Mary Ann Hoberman. Have children write poems, patterning their poems after the text of the book.
2. Journal idea: Give the children some open-ended sentences to complete in their journals (for example, "I like it when my family ..."; "I don't like it when my family ..."; "Something special about my family is ..."; "It makes me mad when my (brother/sister/parent ...)").
3. Enjoy a family feast. Invite the families of your students to a potluck celebrating the family. Send a note home asking each family to bring a favorite dish to share. Encourage parents to have the child help with reading the recipe, measuring, and mixing. Allow each student the opportunity to introduce his or her family to the rest of the class. Take pictures at the dinner, and make them into a class book.

LESSON 4: ALL KINDS OF FAMILIES

Preparation/Materials

- Story or poem about family life to read aloud
- Pictures of family members doing various common family jobs
- Student Activity page

Objectives

- Students will be able to describe how families are alike and different.
- Students will describe ways in which they can contribute to family life.

- Students will choose to help their families in specific ways.

Background

Discussing families and family groupings can be very painful for students whose families do not fit the pattern of two parents and one or more children living together. In teaching this lesson be sensitive to the variety of family groupings represented in the class. This is an excellent opportunity to model loving acceptance of differences.

Lesson

1. Read a story to the class about family life. Suggested titles: *All Kinds of Families* by Norma Simon, *Family Scrapbook* by Marilyn Goffstein, and *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* retold by Michael Rosen.
2. Use the story or poem as a starting point for discussing how families are alike and different. Or enjoy a poem from the collection *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers* by Mary Ann Hoberman. Questions such as the following will help stimulate discussion:
 - "What does your family do that's the same as (the character's) family?"
 - "What does your family do that (the character's) family doesn't do?"
 - "Does your family have more or less people in it?"
 - "Name one way your family is like all other families."
 Make clear that families can be made up of various groupings of people.
3. Have the class identify "family" words, names showing family relationships. Include extended family—cousins, aunt, uncle, grandmother, and grandfather. Perhaps list the words on the board. Then use the family words in the following song called "Cousin Peter." Begin by teaching and singing the first verse.

Sing this second verse:

He hung his hat upon a peg.
 He hung his hat upon a peg.
 He hung his hat upon a peg
 To show that he was here.

Add verses to describe other things Cousin Peter did while he was visiting, and have students mime the actions:

He wiped his shoes upon the mat, etc.
He kicked his shoes off one by one, etc.
He danced about in his stocking feet, etc.
He played he was a great big bear, etc.
He tossed us up into the air, etc.
He made a bow and said goodbye, etc.

Make up more verses about other relations coming to visit—Aunt Matilda, Uncle Matthew, Cousin Martha, Grandma Fisher, Grandpa Cosby.

4. Explain that in a family all members are important and contribute to family life. Show the class pictures of parents and children doing a variety of family jobs. Ask students to describe what's going on in each picture. Why does each of these jobs need to be done in a family? Have volunteers tell how these jobs are done in their family. Make the point that different families handle things differently.
5. **Student activity.** Use the activity sheet to discuss ways students can help their families. Then ask students to color and cut out the coupons. Staple the coupons together to make booklets for students to take home and give to parents. Periodically, ask students how they have helped at home.
6. **Closure.** "Today we learned more about living in families. We talked about ways families can be alike and different. And we talked about jobs that need to be done in a home. We can all help to get the work done."

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Related Activities

1. Center idea: have students work in groups or pairs to make collages of families. Share the collages and ask students to identify ways in which the families are alike and different.
2. Each class member can make a booklet about his or her family. Include a family portrait and picture of the family's favorite activities.
3. Small groups of students can act out family scenes, showing what happens in the home on a weekday morning, at dinner, during a typical evening, and on Sunday morning.
4. Send a note home asking parents to help their child write a few sentences about a special tradition their family has. The child may draw a picture to illustrate. For show and tell have the children "read" or tell about their family tradition. Compare similarities and differences. Then put all the sheets into a class book.
5. Have each child bring in a picture of their family to show. Discuss how the families are alike and different. Put all the pictures on a bulletin board display under the heading "The Family of God." (For Lesson 8 add a border using magazine pictures of families from around the world.) Integrate with math by graphing the number in each family.
6. This is also a good time to talk about the differently abled in families. Read a book such as *I Have a Sister, My Sister Is Deaf* by J. Peterson or *My Sister Kate: How She Sees God's World* by Christine Wright. Look into having "Kids on the Block," a group of differently abled puppets, give a presentation in your classroom or school.

Cousin Peter

1 Last eve - ning Cous - in Pe - ter came, Last

4 eve - ning Cous - in Pe - ter came, Last eve - ning Cous - in

7 Pe - ter came To say that he was here.

Sing this second verse:

He hung his hat upon a peg.
 He hung his hat upon a peg.
 He hung his hat upon a peg
 To show that he was here.

Add verses to describe other things Cousin Peter did while he was visiting, and have students mime the actions:

He wiped his shoes upon the mat, etc.
 He kicked his shoes off one by one, etc.
 He danced about in his stocking feet, etc.
 He played he was a great big bear, etc.
 He tossed us up into the air, etc.
 He made a bow and said goodbye, etc.

Make up more verses about other relations coming to visit—Aunt Matilda, Uncle Matthew, Cousin Martha, Grandma Fisher, Grandpa Cosby.

LESSON 5: CHANGE AND FAMILIES

Preparation/Materials

- Personal photographs or other pictures depicting change in a family
- Story about changes taking place in a family to read to the class
- Student Activity Sheets 1 & 2

Objectives

- Students will identify various ways in which families change.
- Students will describe changes in specific family groupings.

Background

Families change in expected ways: new children are born or adopted into families; children grow up, get married, and have children of their own; parents and grandparents grow older. There are also more painful ways in which families change, for example, through divorce and death. We tend to talk around or ignore the painful changes, but some young children must deal with them, and they need the support of the Christian community. Treating these topics as taboo only adds to the difficulty of the situation. Recognizing divorce as a kind of change that takes place in some families does not imply approval of divorce; it does take into account the reality of divorce in North American society and in the Christian community.

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Lesson

1. Introduce the concept of change in family groupings by showing the class several photographs that depict how your family has changed over the years. Have students identify the changes in the family and the possible reasons for them. (A number of explanations are possible: birth or adoption, growth, death or divorce.)
2. Discuss common ways in which families change: adding new children, older children getting married, grandparents coming to live, divorce, or death of family member. Again, it is important to be sensitive to classroom family situations.
3. Read a story dealing with change in family life. Suggested titles: *Peter's Chair* by Ezra Keats, *A Baby Sister for Frances* by Russell Hoban, *The Terrible Thing That Happened at Our House* by Marge Blaine, and *Julius: Baby of the World* by Kevin Henkes.
4. **Circle talk.** Discuss the story. Ask students to describe what change took place in the family and how the main character reacted to the change. How was the change finally accepted?

5. **Student activity.** Have the students refer to Activity Sheet 1 in their workbooks. Ask them to look carefully at the pictures of families. Explain or elicit from students that these are pictures of three different families. Note that the pictures cover a long period of time. Have the children identify the three family groups. If students have difficulty with this, they can use the framing pattern as a help. Ask students to cut out the pictures and arrange one set of the pictures in sequence. Then have them study the pictures and describe how the family changed. Do the same thing with set 2 and 3. Encourage the class to explain possible reasons for the changes.

Family groupings:

- Set 1—man and woman
man, woman, and child
man, woman, and two more children
- Set 2—woman and child (possible reasons-death of husband or divorce)
woman, man, child (new marriage)
woman, man, and two children
- Set 3—woman, man, and two children
same grouping, but older
another adult added (possibly grandparent)

Have students paste the family groups in the correct sequence on Activity Sheet 2.

6. **Closure.** Use the following questions to summarize and evaluate:
- “What happens to all families?” (They change.)
 - “How did my family change?”
 - “What are some ways families change?”



Related Activities

1. Journal idea: have the students write about a change that has happened in their family.
2. To facilitate further class discussion, have students build families using manipulatives. Provide a set of paper dolls or flannelgraph figures of family members (include a basic nuclear family, grandparents, and other adult figures). Display them in front of the class. Ask volunteers to take turns coming up to choose members to make a family. Then ask them to change the family in some way and to explain the reasons for their changes. (Idea adapted from *Teaching Young Children Using Themes* [Good Year, 1991].)

LESSON 6: THE LIFE CYCLE AND DEATH

Preparation/Materials

- Visual of living/nonliving things (from Lesson 1)
- Optional: dying plant or plant with dead flowers

Objectives

- Students will recognize that all living things grow, change, and die.
- Students will become aware that change and death cause feelings of sadness and loss.

Background

The tendency of many North American adults is to try to shield children from the reality of death. They wish to protect children, to keep the children's lives happy and carefree. But death is an inescapable part of life—even for children—in a world marred by sin. Trying to screen out death actually does children a disservice. In fact, with no guidance from parents or teachers, children may struggle with distorted ideas or fears. By guiding their learning about death, adults not only give children correct information, but also the possibility of sharing feelings and fears about death and, in the Christian community, the hope of resurrection life in Christ.

Ruth Kopp in a helpful book entitled *Where Has Grandpa Gone?* helps us understand the concept of death a child has at various age levels. Between the ages of two and six, most children see “everything that moves and has activity as being alive and personal.” Since young children also tend to personify abstract ideas, as they become aware of death they think of it as a powerful being that can “come at will and remove people and pets” they love. They develop a variety of ways to fend off the “monster death.” Children from about three and four

years old, for example, may hide in the comfort of a security blanket, while from about four to six or seven, they use “fantasy, magic, and wishful thinking” to protect themselves and those they love. But gradually at about six or seven, children acquire what Kopp calls a materialist attitude toward death: they shift their protection against death “from fantasy to the tangible, physical world.” In this phase they become aware of their bodies and how they work and find a defense against death in physical fitness—an idea reinforced by North American society. They think if they are strong and healthy enough, they can prevent illness or injury. During the next phase (from about eight to eleven), children rationally explore their world and the idea of death. They look for reasons and explanations for illnesses, for the most part ignoring the emotions.

So from a young age children are aware of death, and they struggle to deal with it. It isn't possible to shield them from death. However, by sensitively dealing with the subject, we can offer them support and hold out to them the comfort of being a child of God and trusting God to make all things well.

This lesson picks up on ideas presented earlier in the unit and builds on them to introduce the concept of death. The focus of this lesson is the death of plants and animals. (The next lesson deals with human death.) Bear in mind that although all the books suggested in step 3 deal with the death of pets, many of them do obliquely refer to the death of people. Also note that many of these books are not written from a Christian perspective, so it is crucial to read the books critically and to provide that perspective through comment and discussion.

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Lesson

1. Review the concept of living and nonliving. Ask students to name some living and non-living things. Ask: "How do we know when something is alive?" (It moves; it grows.)
2. Review the concept that living things grow and change. Refer to the classroom project, and have students identify how the plants and/or animals have grown and changed. Introduce the topic of death and the life cycle by noting parts of the plant that have died or by showing students a plant with dead parts. Tell students that living things grow, change, and also, finally, die.
3. **Circle talk.** Tell students about a pet you or one of your family members had that died or read one of the many excellent books available that approach the subject of death of a pet. Suggested book titles:
 - Father's Laika* by Mats Wahl
 - Jim's Dog Muffins* by Miriam Cohen
 - Goodbye, Max* by Holly Keller
 - The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown
 - It Must Hurt a Lot: A Child's Book About Death* by Doris Sanford
 - Better With Two* by Catherine Stock

After reading the story, identify some of the feelings that the main character or characters had.

4. Allow time to discuss questions that students may pose or to give them opportunity to talk about family pets that have died.
5. **Closure.** Briefly summarize by reiterating that living things grow, change, and die.

LESSON 7: DEALING WITH DEATH

Preparation/Materials

- Books for Options 2 and 3

Objectives

- Students will recognize that all human beings must die.
- Students will recognize that in the face of death sadness is a fitting emotion.
- Students will identify/become aware of the Christian hope.

Background

This lesson on the death of human beings naturally follows the previous one; however, if you feel that Lesson 5 is sufficient introduction to the subject of death for your class at this time, use this lesson and its resources later in the school year when the subject comes up naturally in the classroom or fits in with the class's Bible studies (for example, tie it in with a lesson on the death of Moses or with your celebration of Easter).

Much of the current literature on death and dying presents death as the natural end of life. We are urged to accept death as natural and, sometimes, even as a beautiful and fitting end to life. It's true that in the world as we know it—a broken world suffering under the effects of sin—death is a fact, and the life cycle inevitably ends in death. But the Bible clearly teaches that death is not a friend, but an enemy. Death is the result of human sin. God created us not for death, but for life. Christians believe Christ has removed the sting of death, and in him we already have new life that never ends. Christ's resurrection body is the guarantee of the resurrection of our bodies.

The way you present this lesson will depend on what approach you are comfortable with and on your classroom situation. Thus this lesson provides several options and lists of resources from which to choose. Keep the lesson simple and present it in a matter-of-fact way. (A similar lesson and options are also included in the Horizons Health teacher guides for kindergarten and grade 2.)



Lesson

Option 1: Tell about the loss of someone you know, how sad you felt and how you missed the person. Talk about the source of your comfort and how that helped you.

Option 2: Begin by introducing the idea of loss by reading a book about moving and loss entailed by the person moving or staying. Use this as a starting point for discussing the loss of someone we know through death.

- We Are Best Friends* by Aliki
- My Friend William Moved Away* by Martha Hickman
- Ira Says Goodbye* by Bernard Waber
- Janey* by Charlotte Zolotow
- Mitchell Is Moving* by Marjorie Sharmat
- Moving Molly* by Shirley Hughes

Option 3: Read one of the books listed below. Although these books deal with death in a sensitive way, none of them is written from a Christian perspective. Thus it is important to read the books critically and spend time discussing the Christian hope in the face of death.

I Had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to Children About Death by Janice Cohn

Everett Anderson's Goodbye by Lucille Clifton

Marianne's Grandmother by Bettina Egger

Grandpa's Slide Show by Deborah Gould

Goodbye Rune by Marit Kaldhol and Wenche Oyen

Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs by Tomie dePaola

Option 4: Use an occasion that naturally arises in the classroom—the death of a relative or acquaintance of a class member—to talk about the subject of death. Be sure to stress the Christian hope, but also talk about feelings connected with death. Although Christians believe in new and eternal life in Christ, grief is nonetheless a fitting response to the loss of a loved one. Identify concrete ways to help the one who is grieving.

Use appropriate Scripture passages such as Psalm 23 or the story of Jesus' resurrection as a basis for continued discussion. And sing appropriate songs about Christ's resurrection or about the comfort of the Christian hope. A few suggested titles:

"Children of the Heavenly Father" (*Psalter Hymnal*, 440; *Songs of God's Love*, 62)

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" (*Songs of God's Love*, 56)

"The Lord's My Shepherd" (*Proclaim Songbook 2*, 16; *Psalter Hymnal*, 161; alternate tune, *Children's Hymnbook*, 19)

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (*Proclaim Songbook 2*, 25)

LESSON 8: BELONGING TO THE FAMILY OF GOD

Preparation/Materials

- Chart paper
- Optional: additional songs of praise and/or songs about the family of God

Objectives

- Students will identify another family to which Christians belong: the family of God.
- Students will describe specific things the family of God does.
- Students will react by praising God for making them part of God's family.

Background

This lesson places the family within the context of the family of God. Christian parents and children are both, by adoption, children of God and part of the worldwide family of God. In this context, the family does not exist for its own sake. Rather, as Christians we offer our family life to God and live it in gratitude before God. The family, then, becomes a means of loving and serving God—and others.

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Lesson

1. Tell students that in the last lessons the class has been talking about living and growing up in families. Explain that Christians also belong to another, bigger family. Lead students to identify that family as the family of God. Ask: "Who are in the family of God?" (All those who love and serve God—from all over the world.)
2. Work with the class to make an experience chart of activities of the family of God: worshipping and praising God, praying and studying the Bible, helping and loving each other, helping and loving others, telling others about Jesus, and so on. Illustrate the chart with sketches, illustrations, or photographs.
3. Thank God for including the families of the class in the family of God. Sing songs of praise to God and/or about the Church. Teach students the song based on verses of Psalm 100. Explain the meaning of "make a glad noise," "enter his gates," and "sheep of his pasture." Students will enjoy clapping and/or marching as they sing. Other suggested songs are: "The Church Is One Big Family" (*Proclaim Songbook 1*, 29), "Let Us Go to the House of the Lord" (*Proclaim Songbook 2*, 25), and "You Are Our God; We Are Your People" (*Psalter Hymnal*, 272).
4. **Closure.** "Today we learned that as Christians we are part of another family, the family of God. God's family is made up of people and of families from all over the world."

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Related Activities

1. Focus on the diversity and wideness of the family of God by inviting international students or other visitors from overseas in your community to tell the class something about the family of God in their country.
2. Plan a service project in which students show love to other members of God's family. For example, the class can sing their favorite songs for a seniors' church group.
3. To increase students' world awareness, add to your bulletin board display of family pictures (Lesson 4) a border of magazine pictures of families from other countries and cultures.

Psalm 100

Based on Psalm 100:1,3,4

Czechoslovakian Folk Song

1 Make a glad noise to the Lord, our God.

3 Know that he made us and we are his.

5 We are his peo - ple, the sheep of his pas - ture.

7 En - ter his gates with thanks - giv - ing and praise.