

Sticky Family Stuff and God's Glue

by Cody Zabroski and Carol Duerksen

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- The video or DVD of "Signs" and the equipment to show it.
- Snacks and drinks—the snacks must be sticky, like popcorn balls, cotton candy, things like that.
- Bibles
- Newsprint and marker
- Small post-it notes

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS:

Greet students and welcome them to get a snack. Give adequate time for eating and "stickiness" to set in, but make sure students don't wash their hands. BEFORE you let them clean up, ask:

- Is sticky food a good or bad thing? Both?
- If you were going to draw a comparison between the stickiness on your hands and families, what would it be?
- How do families get "sticky"?

CONNECT:

THE MOVIE:

Show clip #1: "fourteen light" chapter 10 [00:39-00:46]. In this scene the family is watching the unfolding events of the world on the television. The kids are asleep and Merrill and Graham talk about how they feel about "signs."

Discuss:

- 1 In this clip we see how different family members can have different views and perspectives on things. One person views incidents in the world as just chance and not having meaning, while the other is a "miracle man." How can different views affect family dynamics?
- 2 What does it mean to stay by a family member even if you don't have the same views? What do you do if one family member pushes his/her view onto you?

Show clip #2: "The Invasion" chapter 15 [1:06-1:09:17]

The family is watching T.V. and the news show is broadcasting that there will be an invasion within the hour. Merrill figures out that the "invaders" will be within a mile of their house. Morgan makes the statement to Merrill "I wish you were my dad."

Discuss:

- 1 We see the family under a lot of stress both from one another and the external events that are happening in their world. How do you think the family feels right now?
- 2 Why do you think Graham just leaves and says "I'm going to finish the boards?"
- 3 How does Morgan feel at this time? Why do you think he makes the statement to Merrill "I wish you were my dad"?
- 4 How do you think families should react and deal with statements like that? How can that make or break a family?

Show Clip # 3: "The Last Supper" [1:10:37-1:12:39]

The family is eating their supper, and Morgan wants to say a prayer, but Graham gets mad and doesn't want to waste time on prayer. Bo starts crying and Graham gets frustrated with her and yells at her. Morgan then says "I hate you" to his father. Then after some crying, Morgan gives his dad a hug to show that he forgives him. The whole family gets in the hug and they are finally whole.

- 1 We hear Morgan say "I hate you" to Graham. How do you think Morgan felt? Graham?
- 2 Why do you think Graham yelled at Bo for crying?
- 3 Why is it that Morgan gets up and hugs Graham and not the other way around? How do you think they all feel during the hug?

THE BIBLE:

As a group, recall the story of Joseph and his family, as found in Genesis 37-50. Start at the beginning, skim through the chapters, and make notes on the newsprint about what happens to Joseph and his relationship with his family. Ask students to look for two kinds of "stickiness" in the story:

- 1 Negative interactions between family members. When they find one of those, put a piece of leftover sticky food on the newsprint next to that item.
- 2 Positive interactions between family members that show how they "stuck together". Put a post-it note next to those items.

APPLY & RESPOND:

Look at the places where post-it notes indicate positive family interaction. What happened there? Love overcame jealousy? Forgiveness was offered? Identify “God’s glue” in those interactions and write them on the post-it notes.

Hand out the post-it notes to students. If you have more students than notes, create more with the same words on them. Ask students to spend some time on their own, thinking about their own family situation and when they need the words on their note to apply to their family. What are the sticky situations that need God’s glue?

Gather in a group circle, notes in hand, and share and pray together. If students want to share their thoughts, that’s great, but don’t force anyone.

Close with a prayer for “God’s glue” to be evident and powerful in their families.