

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pencil and pieces of paper; small container
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Clock or watch with second hand for timing
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: OPEN MIC

Think up a list of fun characters (and character traits) ahead of time and write them on scraps of paper placed together in an opaque container. One at a time, the teens choose a paper and take the microphone (this can be figurative or literal; if you have a hairbrush or other random object that can be used as a prop) and sit in front of the group. Each character is a prospective adoptive parent. The rest of the group is acting in the role of a committee doing an interview. They get to ask questions of each candidate to try to determine whether this person would be able to provide a good home for a child – and try to guess the character or character trait of the person they are interviewing.

*Some character (and trait) ideas to include might be: a snake enthusiast, someone who only came to the interview for the snacks, a werewolf, someone who is afraid of germs, a super-villain, someone who is excited about everything in the room, a talking kangaroo, someone who can’t stop yawning, etc.*

FOR SMALL GROUPS, YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. FOR LARGE (OR TALKATIVE) GROUPS, YOU MAY HAVE TO WORK WITHIN A TIME LIMIT (FOR EXAMPLE, THE COMMITTEE GETS ONE MINUTE TO ASK THEIR QUESTIONS AND GUESS THE CHARACTER OR CHARACTER TRAIT).

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: GOOD PARENTS

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What qualities do you think make for good or bad parents?
- If you were a parent with unlimited resources, what sort of life would you want to give to your child?

*A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *The world is filled with examples of good and bad parenting, and your teens will likely have a store of opinions to share based on their own experience and that of their friends. Your teens may have a somewhat skewed*

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*perspective of what constitutes good vs. bad parenting, so you may want to challenge with a few follow-up questions where appropriate. (For example, if you get “A bad parent is one who doesn’t allow their child to do whatever they want,” you might ask, “Why do you think a parent might choose to set boundaries?”)*

- *Most parents want the best for their children. But no human parents have the capacity to give their children everything. And importantly, giving a child everything may not be in his or her best interest. So the challenge for a loving parent is to know how to be both wise and generous so that the child can fulfil his or her potential as much as possible, and grow into a principled and moral adult.*

## THE LESSON: ROMANS 8

The first part of the lesson can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

The New Testament writers like to use the word “heirs” to describe Christians. The word appears in Hebrews, James, 1st Peter, and many of the epistles penned by the Apostle Paul (including Romans, which we’re going to look at today). Now, an heir is someone who has the privilege of inheriting money (and in some cases land and position) from someone who has died, usually a parent. But when the Bible uses this term to describe Christians, it is drawing upon this human image to make an important point: that we have a new relationship with God and it is one that is characterized by intimacy and privilege.

J.I. Packer touched upon this when he wrote, “Do I, as a Christian, understand myself? Do I know my own real identity? My own real destiny? *I am a child of God. God is my Father; heaven is my home; every day is one day nearer. My Saviour is my brother; every Christian is my brother too.* Say it over and over to yourself first thing in the morning, last thing at night, as you wait for the bus, any time when your mind is free, and ask that you may be enabled to live as one who knows it is all utterly and completely true.”

Through the work of Christ we have been adopted and made heirs of the most amazing parent imaginable. Not only does this mean we have a new relationship with our heavenly Father, but it gives us a new relationship with each other, and a new way of seeing ourselves.

Refer to Romans 8: 14-19, 23-31, 35, 37-39.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: ROMANS 8:14-39.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What does this passage tell us about the Holy Spirit?
- Why do you think there is so much talk about suffering and persecution in this text?
- What does this passage tell us about God’s love?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *The Spirit leads us. The Spirit is described as a “Spirit of adoption as sons,” having a role in bringing us into intimacy with God. The word “Abba” which is used here and in Galatians describing the voice given to our prayers through the Spirit is a term of relational intimacy. It is also used by Christ in his prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14). Verse 16 says that the Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God”. Verse 23 says we have “the*

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*firstfruits of the Spirit,” suggesting that this is like a downpayment of something even greater that is yet to come. Verses 26-27 tell us that the Spirit helps us to pray when we are too weak to find words, and the Spirit is able to intercede for us “according to the will of God”.*

- *Paul was writing during a time when Christians were experiencing a great deal of persecution for their faith. He doesn’t want to ignore the reality that his readers are facing, but instead he wants to provide them with encouragement that is rooted in these important truths: they belong to God, they are loved by God, and their future is with him.*
- *This passage tell us that God’s love for us is the intimate love of a parent for a precious child. It tells us that God is able to craft something good out of anything, even suffering. It tell us that he has chosen us to become like Jesus. It tell us that God is “for us”. It tells us that there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from God’s love.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time quietly considering what it means to be an “heir with Christ”. Close with this meditative reading adapted from Galatians 4:4-7: ***“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem us who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as his own children. And because we are his sons and daughters, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So I am no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. Thanks be to God”.***

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, BCP PAGE 131)

## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

### ROMANS 8: **CHOSEN. ADOPTED. HEIRS.**

<sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God... <sup>23</sup>And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

<sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

<sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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