



Our Beautiful Blended Family

National Step-Family Day - 09.16.18

Did you know that almost 1/3 of the U.S. population has some type of “step” relationship? That is to say that one out of every three people you know has some form of “step-family” dynamic within their family or extended family tree.

Step-families come in different shapes and sizes. Many are formed from the tragedy of divorce, death of a parent, or a child born out of wed-lock. If you have a blended family, it is important to understand that you are not alone. According to “smartstep-families.com,” 40% of all couples with children are step-couples and over 30% of the under 18 population live in a step-family environment. We also know that step-families are not new to society as we have seen them throughout the Bible. In fact, we know that 19% of Jesus’ lineage was made up of a non-traditional family (In actuality it was probably much higher). And when you think about it, Jesus grew up with His stepfather – Joseph!



Couples who go into forming a blended home often believe their new family dynamic will be no different than that of a biological family. Hollywood often gives us a false understanding of this through TV shows like Full House or even The Brady Bunch. In reality, couples soon discover that trying to have a healthy marriage and raise children within a blended family can be challenging and complex at times. The more intricate their family dynamics are, the more challenges they face. Keeping things in perspective, there is only one configuration to that of a traditional “bio-family”, but there are upwards of 67 possible configurations to a step-family. Blended families have to consider using unique approaches to building a healthy home more than that of a bio-family, as their configurations and dynamics can be complicated in so many ways.

Here are a few steps couples can take to move their blended family forward. **Couples need to consider how to approach each of these in a healthy way dependent upon their unique family configuration.**

◆ **See your marriage as the most important relationship within your home.** Declare your loyalty to your spouse while affirming your child(ren) that they are loved and valued. Whether you are a “bio-family” or step-family, mom and dad need to be a **united front.**

◆ **Be patient with yourself, your spouse and the child(ren) as family members come together.** View your family coming together slowly, similar to the slow cooking method of a Crockpot and not forcibly like how a blender chops up the ingredients. Time is needed to develop trust, commitment and shared history with one another. These are important in helping everyone find their sense of belonging and identity within the new family unit.

**MY
BLENDED
FAMILY!!**



◆ **If you’re a single parent,** keep in mind, that according to “Dating and the Single Parent,” child(ren) often need more time than adults to process the idea of marriage. It is believed that some children are a year behind their parent with the acceptance of marriage.

◆ **Allow the child(ren) to set the pace of the relationship between them and the step-parent.** If the child(ren) is open to receiving you, then you should also return the child(ren)’s affections. If the child(ren) is standoffish or distant you will need to find healthy ways of managing the tension while looking for opportunities to connect.

◆ **Co-parenting with your ex can be difficult but is extremely important:**

Romans 12:17-18 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

- ◆ Don’t make your child(ren) the messenger between you and your ex.
- ◆ Schedule monthly (perhaps more often) discussions with your ex to work through co-parenting matters.
- ◆ Don’t speak negatively about your ex, especially in front of the child(ren).
- ◆ Make any custody structures work for your child(ren), even if you don’t like the details of the arrangement.

Every step-family has its unique differences as well as challenges that couples will face and navigating through them is part of the process. In order to help blended couples succeed with their marriage and parenting, Victory is launching **Blended Life**. Blended Life is an 8-week class helping married couples focus on the tools to build a healthy step-family. Registration for Blended Life is open and class begins October 14, 2018.

GOD TAKES CARE OF ME

PRESCHOOL

WEEK 1

RUTH AND NAOMI - RUTH 1

READ Philippians 4:19 This week in VicKids your child is learning about Ruth and Naomi and their journey to Bethlehem.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Read Philippians 4:19 in an easy-to-understand version with your child. Talk to your child about the verse, emphasizing God knows what we need and can give us everything we need. Based on this verse say this together as a family: "My God supplies all our needs." You may even want to make up simple movements or sing it for your children!

Pray God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for taking care of us all the time. In Jesus Name. Amen!

WEEK 2

RUTH MET BOAZ - RUTH 1:22; 2

READ Matthew 6:32 Today we learned Ruth went to gather grain in Boaz's field, and Boaz treated her with kindness.

EXPLORE TOGETHER After dinner one night this week, take some time to have a family discussion about God's great care. Ask your child several questions, posing a need and letting your child guess the solution. For example, "What do we wear when it's cold outside?" (a warm coat), or "What do we need when we scrape our knee?" (a bandage or medicine). Emphasize to your child God knows our needs and loves to take care of us. Be sure he or she knows God is the One Who provides for all of our needs.

Pray God, thank You for using Boaz to take care of Ruth. Thank You for taking care of us too! We love You. In Jesus Name. Amen!

WEEK 3

GOD TOOK CARE OF RUTH AND NAOMI - RUTH 3

READ Psalm 23:1 This week in VicKids we learned that Boaz agreed to be Ruth's family redeemer (someone who takes care of us when times are hard)

EXPLORE TOGETHER Read Psalm 23:1 in an easy-to-understand version together as a family. Tell your child the Bible reminds us that just like a shepherd takes care of his sheep, the Lord takes care of us. Discuss some of the specific ways a shepherd cares for his sheep. Compare them to the way the Lord cares for us.

Pray God, thank You for loving Ruth and having a plan to take care of her. Thank You for loving us and taking care of us too! We love You. In Jesus Name. Amen!

WEEK 4

RUTH MARRIED BOAZ - RUTH 4

READ Ruth 4 Today we learned Boaz and Ruth got married and had a baby boy!

EXPLORE TOGETHER Take a family nature walk this week. Talk about the different plants and animals you see and tell your child God takes care of these things too. You may want to discuss some of the specific ways He does so. Like providing rain for the plants and food for animals. Emphasize to your child God takes care of your family as well. Use this time to remind your child to talk to God when he or she has a need, and trust Him to take care of it.

Pray God, thank You for taking care of Ruth. Thank You for taking care of us too, by sending us Your Son, Jesus to be our Redeemer. We love You. In Jesus Name. Amen!

WEEK 5

GOD TAKES CARE OF US - PHILIPPIANS 4:19

READ Philippians 4:19 This week in VicKids your child is reviewing the story of Ruth and Naomi and how God took care of them both.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Find some time during the week to talk with your child about how God takes care of your family. Share with your child some needs God has met, and allow your child to share some as well. Discuss provisions such as your home, clothing, food, medicine, a warm jacket, etc. Remind your child God knows exactly what we need and that He takes care of us. You may want to allow your child to draw some of the things as you discuss them and post them on the refrigerator as a reminder.

Pray God, thank You for Your wonderful plan to take care of Ruth. Thank You for having a plan to take care of each of us. We love You. In Jesus Name. Amen!.

WOMEN OF FAITH

ELEMENTARY

A CHOICE OF FAITH - RUTH 1:1-22

WEEK 1

READ Ruth 1:1-22 This week in VicKids your student learns that the most important decision to make is the one to follow God. Your student will be learning about the choices made by Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Ask your student this question..."Ruth and Naomi were to live with us in 2018, what do you think they would have done to provide for themselves if their husbands had died?" Wait for their response. They would probably have gotten jobs and earned paychecks so they could pay for their house, their bills, and all their food, right? Women who lived when Ruth and Naomi did didn't have jobs available to them, though. Money didn't exist then, so there were no jobs to go and get hired for. Everyone worked for his or her family on the land they husband owned. Women couldn't own land. Since Ruth and Naomi didn't have husbands, they had no land and now way to earn a living. They didn't even have a home! If one of Naomi's male relatives didn't take them in, they would be without food or shelter!

Pray - God, I thank you that I can have faith in you even if I can't see you. Just like Naomi and Ruth had faith in God to guide them, I can have faith in Jesus to guide me! In Jesus name, Amen!

FAITHFULNESS IS REWARDED - RUTH 2:1-23

WEEK 2

READ Ruth 2: 1-23 This week in VicKids your student learns that faithfulness to God is rewarded. We learned about how Ruth's faithfulness to God and to her mother-in-law Naomi made a way for her to receive food and shelter from Boaz.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Take time this week to talk with your student about how God's Word tells us to work as if we are doing it for Him. When Ruth was working in the fields she gained favor with Boaz. Why do you think that was? Read verses 11-12. Ruth was faithful to serve God by staying close and serving Naomi. That was a tough decision for Ruth to make. But she was rewarded with more than she could imagine! Ask your student about some things they find hard to do. How do they feel when something is hard to do? What can they do to help them keep going when they are faced with a difficult task or decision (like school, sports, friends etc)? How do they feel when that stay with a job and complete it?

Pray - Jesus, thank you for giving me the desire to serve others as I serve You. When I find it hard to do, I need to remind myself that all I do is for You and Your Kingdom. In Jesus name, Amen!

A PICTURE OF REDEMPTION - RUTH 3:1-18, 4:1-21

WEEK 3

READ Ruth 3 and 4 This week your student learns more about the word "redemption" and how Boaz was the "kinsmen redeemer" for Ruth and Naomi. A kinsman redeemer was a close relative who could opt to take someone in his family as his responsibility in order to help them out of a hardship.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Take time this week to talk with your student about the term "kinsmen redeemer". Why was Boaz Ruth's redeemer? Why did she need a redeemer? Read Galatians 4:4-5. Why do we need a redeemer? Read Romans 6:23. What is our "hardship" and who is our Redeemer? What happened for us as a result of Jesus being our Redeemer? Jesus paid the price for our sin and now we have been redeemed and brought into the family of God...forever!

Pray - Thank you Jesus for being our Redeemer! Thank you for buying us with the price of your life by dying on the cross and coming back to life! Thank you for forgiving us of our sin and giving a new life! In Jesus name, Amen!

DEDICATED TO SERVE - 1 Samuel 1:1-28

WEEK 4

READ Samuel 1 This week in VicKids your student learns about Hannah and how she worshiped God continually, prayed expectantly and gave willingly.

EXPLORE TOGETHER This week, we saw how God rewarded Hannah's faithfulness and dedication to prayer by blessing her with a son named Samuel. When Samuel grew up he became a great, godly man. God gave Hannah a son and because she was a godly woman she kept her promise to God. She was dedicated to serving God through her willingness to give Samuel back to Him. Ask your student, "Have you ever made a promise to do something for someone and when it came time to do that "thing" you didn't?" Why not? What kept you from keeping your word? Go back to Week 2 and look at what happens when we serve or do something for others. Read more of Samuel to become familiar with his story. What was the reward for Israel because of Hannah's dedication to serving God?

Pray - Jesus, help me to have a heart to serve others, even when I don't feel like it. When I put the needs of others before my own, I get to see what a sacrifice really means. Thank you for sacrificing your life for mine! In Jesus name, Amen!

REVIEW WEEK - TAKE THIS TIME TO SHORE UP THE LAST 4 WEEKS WITH YOUR STUDENT!

WEEK 5

CONNECTING AT HOME

victoryathome.com

On Being a Blended Family

"If a mom and dad can love more than one child then why is it so hard to understand that a child can love more than one father or mother?"

Unknown

Campus Calendar

NORCROSS

9/1 - Family Camp

9/8 - Victory at Home - 5:30 pm
Parent Child Dedication Workshop

9/15 - Parent Child Dedication Service 10:00am

10/6 - Victory at Home - 10:00 am
Preparing for Teen Years Workshop

Hamilton Mill

9/1 - Family Camp

9/9 - Victory at Home - 1:00 pm
Parent Child Dedication Workshop

9/9 & 9/23 - Vickids Volunteer Orientation

Midtown

9/1 - Family Camp

9/9 - Launch at The Gathering Spot

Campus Service Times

NORCROSS - SAT 6 PM, SUN 9 & 11 AM, 1 PM

HAMILTON MILL - SUN 9 & 11 AM, 1 PM

MIDTOWN - times and locations subject to change.
Go to victorymidtown.com for specific service times.

*"Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are **THE MOST** important work."*

C.S. Lewis

Blended Life is an 8-week class where couples within a step-family can grow and connect with others. Couples will learn biblical strategies to achieve marital oneness while navigating the complexities of parenting within step-families.

Cost is \$50/couple. Childcare is available. **Registration is required.**

Norcross Campus - October 14th - victoryatl.com/blendedlife/

Hamilton Mill Campus - October 15th - victoryhm.com/blendedlife/

Follow us on:



VICKIDSATL

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him". **Hebrews 11:6 NLT**

Additional Resources

victoryatl.com/athomenewsletter/