



Lesson Plan: Redefining Family

For Christian schools and home schools in Canada
(Grades 10 – 12)



ARPA Canada
www.arpacanada.ca
1-866-691-ARPA
mark@arpacanada.ca

Redefining Family – What’s the Big Deal?

Length: One 50 minute lesson

Level: Grades 8 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Sociology, Bible/Religion

Overview for Teachers: In the summer of 2005, Canada’s Parliament passed the *Civil Marriage Act* which redefined marriage to include homosexual couples. Canada became the fourth country in the world to officially redefine marriage in this way. Parliament’s decision followed numerous court decisions which found that the traditional definition of marriage was “unconstitutional.”

But this wasn’t the only effort to redefine the traditional family. In 2007, an Ontario court ruled that a child can legally have three parents. The biological mother and father of the child wanted the mom’s lesbian partner to legally be the boy’s parent as well. The court agreed, resulting in the boy having three “parents.” In addition to these changes to the traditional family, there is a growing push to allow for polygamy in Canada.

The redefinition of family has resulted in part from the breakdown of the family that accelerated with the introduction of “no-fault” divorce back in 1968. When maintaining marriage became a matter of preference, it did not take long for other groups to take advantage of this and redefine other parts of family according to preference.

What is going on behind each of these scenarios? The traditional family unit is being redefined according to individual preferences. Instead of biology and adoption defining family, family becomes whatever people want it to be. With these changes, there is no longer any objective standard of what should constitute a family. Instead, courts determine the new parameters based on what they think is “loving” and “tolerant”.

This redefinition of family is a rebellion against the long-standing definition of family (a married father and mother and biological or adopted children). This traditional definition was not simply some arbitrary definition that worked in the past but should be replaced to suit our postmodern times. It was designed by God to reflect the spiritual relationship between Him and us. Ephesians 5 explains how the relationship between husband and wife is to reflect the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Likewise, the relationship between fathers and children is also to reflect the way that we are obedient to our heavenly Father. Throughout the Bible it is very clear that God puts a divine imprint on His creation. The family is to reflect who God is to this world. It is not to be defined according to our changing preferences but according to God’s eternal standard.

God also knows what is best for us. The traditional family unit is not only a spiritual reality; it is made for our good. When it is destroyed through divorce, redefining marriage, or any other way, there are inevitable consequences. A wealth of social research testifies to the importance of stable traditional families for the well-being of children and society in general.

For Further Study:

http://www.focusonthefamily.ca/tfn/family/PDF/Marriage_in_Jeopardy.pdf - This electronic pamphlet provides some typical questions and solid answers about redefining marriage to include homosexual couples.

[Institute of Marriage and Family Canada \(www.imfcanada.org\)](http://www.imfcanada.org): This think tank from Focus on the Family has a lot of resources and studies that affirm the value of the traditional family unit.

Procedure

- 1) Begin with a short lecture explaining some of the changes to the definition of the family and the reasons that underlie these changes (from notes above). Describe some common features of Biblical Jewish families.
- 2) Divide the class into four groups and get each group to look at a different aspect of families.
 - a. Group 1: Research a typical Jewish family in Biblical times. For example, what was Jesus' family like?
 - b. Group 2: Research families in Canada in the past two hundred years (e.g. Quebec in the 1800's).
 - c. Group 3: Have the group search through magazines (such as *National Geographic*, *Time*, and *Macleans*) to find pictures of families throughout the past century. Try to get the year from which the picture was taken.
 - d. Group 4: Compare average families from different continents today (African, American, Asian, European).
- 3) Have each group report their findings to the class. Have them consider the following questions:
 - a. How many children are in the family? When does this change? Why?
 - b. What do the pictures show about the relationship between the husband and wife?
 - c. What major changes occur? How are these changes represented? Positively, negatively etc.? Which are cultural but acceptable? Which are unbiblical?
 - d. What are some of the positive and negative consequences of the changed families that we see today?
- 4) After all four groups have presented their information, relate what they have learned to the current trend to redefine the family as it is happening in Canada today. Possibly have them prepare a written response to this question.