

SUB TOPIC THEME:
THE FATHER EFFECT:
 good, bad and absent

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

Fathers come in many flavors and sizes, and none of them is perfect. Good dads have some of the characteristics found in Scripture like protecting and providing as well as loving and obeying God. We can't necessarily change our dads, but we can seek to understand them, appreciate the good things they do, and build a stronger relationship with them whether they fit the 'good dad' or 'broken dad' mold.



Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. A pair of dice.
3. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
4. Bibles so you can look up the scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students transformed in their positive influence on friends!

Instructive Prep:

Fathers are so important to healthy, resilient teen development, yet this is the time in life when dads are often absent because of divorce or deployment or OpTempo. Girls and guys may have some very different reactions about their dads. Generally speaking, young women probably want to know that they are loved by their dads and that their dads think they are beautiful. Guys most likely want to be respected and to have their dad's approval.

This session is designed to look at the ways teens can understand and appreciate some of the good qualities in their dads. It's easy to pick out what's wrong with our fathers, but emphasis should be given to seeking the good things that dads do. The tough balance is that some fathers may be cruel and broken men, and we can't ignore honest cries from our teens when they want to talk about conflict and genuine trauma within their family. Spend a good portion of this study *really listening* to what your students say. Take your leads from them, and if anything serious surfaces, make sure you let the chaplain know.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do, and what next*. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study (like making a hand gesture as a weapon). Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, we are moving toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

Fathers have a very tough job in light of the military environment today! If they are the military member, they are training or deployed or running at a very fast pace (OpTempo). Some are simply absent because divorce has created a separation from you and your family. Whatever the case, dad's are human beings that make mistakes as well as provide and protect their families. As a teen in a military family, your dad is important to your healthy development, and whether you're a girl or a guy depends on whether you look to your dad for love or approval. We can't necessarily change our dads, but we can seek to understand them, appreciate the good things they do, and build a stronger relationship with them whether they fall into the 'good dad' or 'broken dad' mold in our eyes.

INTRO STORY:

The Great Santini tells the story of hard-nosed Marine fighter pilot Lt. Col. Wilbur "Bull" Meechum, who calls himself "The Great Santini," and the family he runs with a strict hand. It follows the Meechum family as they move to and struggle to fit into the Marine town of Beaufort, South Carolina. The story contrasts Bull Meechum's success as a military aviator with his shortcomings as a husband and father.

The story explores main character Ben Meechum's growth into manhood, his experiences playing basketball for his high school, as well as his friendship with an African-American farmer. It exposes the love-hate relationship between Ben and his father, and the lengths Ben goes to in an effort to win his father's acceptance and love.

The Great Santini is a story about a son's growth into manhood and his determination to be himself. It is violent, shocking, funny, moving, and overwhelmingly real.

The movie opens with 'Bull' Meechum, The Great Santini, flying fighter planes for the Marines in Spain. It then cuts to a going away party for Bull at the sedate Navy Officers' Club. The party gets a little out of hand. Before being kicked out, the

Marines stage a 'floor show' for the prim Navy guests that sends them running for the door.

Back in the States the Meechum family -- Lillian, Bull's wife, Ben, the eldest son, Mary Anne, Karen, and Mathew -- are all awaiting the return of their father and saying a few last Hail Mary's to ensure him a safe trip. Despite Lillian's admonitions, when he lands they all rush out to greet him.

Bull and Lillian start to catch up that night when Bull jumps out of bed at three AM and wakes up the children. Everyone moans and groans about Bull's wake-up time, but in his military style he loads everyone in the car to move to their new house.

As they travel to Beaufort, Bull talks to Ben about being a fighter pilot. Ben says that he might not become one. They move into a beautiful large plantation home. Bull gives his kids a speech about them being the best and how they can do anything better than any other kids. He asks a lot from his children, and is very demanding. Since Ben is the oldest son, Bull expects the most from him.

Bull visits his base to find his new responsibilities. Trying to pull a prank on an old friend he mistakenly attacks a young enlisted Marine in the 'head'. He covers the mistake, but not well enough. His friend, Virgil, hears about the incident and teases him for it. Then Bull is told that he is there to get a squadron in shape for the Cuban Crisis.

Ben and Bull are playing one-on-one basketball. The whole family is watching and everyone cheers for Ben. When he wins, Bull won't accept the defeat and teases Ben into crying. Later that night, Ben and Lillian watch Bull practicing his shots in the pouring rain. He is admitting his defeat and apologizing.

Knowing this basic background to the story, take a look at this scene and discuss what you feel and observe.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06KmezV_1ns

(this YouTube video has some weird clapping and slow motion overlaid onto it, but you can still hear the dialog and understand the scene just fine)

Three Music Videos

Two of the following music videos are written from a father's perspective to their daughters. The last one is a guy's longing to feel his dad's approval. Sometimes it is eye-opening for us as teens to see inside our fathers' hearts and what makes them tick. A lot of men don't express their feelings very well (the military actually trains to suppress them), and to understand that might help with developing a more

intimate relationship with your dad. Take a look at these videos and discuss what they bring to mind.

When I'm Gone - Eminem

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wYNFfgrXTI>

There Goes My Life – Kenny Chesney

http://www.metacafe.com/watch/sy-42392067001/kenny_chesney_there_goes_my_life_official_music_video/

Perfect - Simple Plan

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X60KwLs5Qpc>

Intro Questions:

1. What are some of your first impressions of the basketball competition?
2. What feelings were aroused in you as you listened to Eminem? How about Kenny Chesney or Simple Plan?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Use the dice to roll and determine the high roller. They would answer question 1 first and then go around the circle clockwise for the first to answer the following questions.

1. If you were to give a title to what you think the *video clip* is all about, what would that title be? (see Student Response sheet)
2. How do you think the daughter who was hit with the basketball felt after her dad did that? How about the mom?
3. Do you admire Ben for resisting his dad's antagonism? Why or why not?
4. The movie *The Great Santini* offers a window into the life of a military family. How much do you relate to this video scene?
5. If you could write a short note (3-5 sentences) to the Colonel in this scene, what would you want to say to him? (Write it on the Student Response sheet)
6. Listening to the two music videos, what insight does it give you to the way dads think? How might that help you relate better to your father?

7. Write your own questions: _____

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

The following Scripture passage offers a biblical look at Joseph, Jesus' human father. He makes some pretty serious decisions that lead to some drastic actions for his family, Mary and the baby Jesus. By doing this, Joseph shows us what it means to be as a great protector, and a father who was obedient to God.

Matthew 2:13-23

¹³ After they [the visitors from the East] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave." ¹⁴ Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until Herod died. This was done to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my Son out of Egypt."

¹⁶ When Herod realized that the visitors from the East had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger—this was done in accordance with what he had learned from the visitors about the time when the star had appeared. ¹⁷ In this way what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true: ¹⁸ "A sound is heard in Ramah, the sound of bitter weeping. Rachel is crying for her children; she refuses to be comforted, for they are dead."

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel, because those who tried to kill the child are dead." ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Israel. ²² But when Joseph heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Judea, he was afraid to go there. He was given more instructions in a dream, so he went to the province of Galilee ²³ and made his home in a town named Nazareth. And so what the prophets had said came true: "He will be called a Nazarene."

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Make a list of ways that your dad is a protector for your family. What things have you seen him do to provide for you and your family in general? Discuss something on this list by having a 'dad brag session' with your group (use Student response sheet)
2. What are the ways that you are in competition with your dad like Ben was with his dad, the Colonel? Have you had antagonistic incidents like this? Take

some time to talk about the last confrontation you had with your dad and why you think it happened. Discuss how it might be resolved or avoided next time. (Remember, as you get older you are developing more into your own person, and that means change and possibly conflict along the road with your father.)

3. Write your own challenge: _____

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. WHAT TITLE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE VIDEO CLIP:

2. WRITE A SHORT NOTE TO COLONEL MEECHUM (3-5 sentences):

3. WAYS YOUR DAD PROTECTS AND PROVIDES (the dad brag list):

4. LATEST CONFRONTATION WITH YOUR DAD & STEPS TO ADDRESS IT: