

MOVIE: Cheaper by the Dozen

**** Please read the Introduction to Large Group Studies in order to best utilize this material**

Sub Topic theme:

PCS-HERE WE GO AGAIN!

**Lesson objective:**

To look at the transition experience of moving (again) through the eyes of various family members so that students can identify with one or several of the characters and their issues with leaving one home to establish another. When teens can identify reasons for their emotions and reactions toward PCSing through a fictional character, they can more easily develop some helping strategies for their next PCS, thus building personal and family resiliency.

Intro to the Movie:**Cheaper by the Dozen**

The Baker family is a happy and large family with 12 children who reside in Midland, Indiana. One day Tom Baker (the dad) gets an offer for his dream job: to become the coach of the Stallions. Tom returns home with the new job offer and promotion in the urban near-north Chicago suburb of Evanston, IL, with educational advantages and a new vehicle! Although Kate (the mom) approves, his children overhear and object to his proposed move in a family conference. Even though the children vote “No,” Tom decides to accept the job and move to the city, many miles away from their current countryside home.

One day, aspiring author, Kate Baker receives a call telling her that her new book is perfect, and she should go on a promotion tour. So she makes the decision to go to New York, and leaves her husband alone with the 12 children. Problems soon erupt, but everything comes to a halt when, after being grounded, the Baker kids sneak out and wreck their friend's birthday party. Kate ends the book tour and returns home angry with Tom for pretending he could handle it. The family's condition seriously comes to light after Kate discovers a disturbing note on Mark's bed, and Mark has gone missing. The family begins searching, but after calling the police, Tom realizes that Mark's favorite place has always been the Midland house. He frantically makes his way to the railway station and soon finds Mark on a train heading toward

Midland. They ride the train together to Midland and are greeted by the family at the railway station the next morning. They apologize to each other, and Tom decides to quit his football career to find a job, which would provide more time for him to spend with his family. While they return to the city and begin to adjust to their new life, Kate's book is published and stays at number 1 on the best seller's list for 12 months.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as a lack of control over a family move, varying levels of emotion and resistance based on the family member, difficulty in moving, how the kids adjust to their new neighborhood, how the family handles transition problems, and how they solve these issues. (Students may 'see themselves' in various characters throughout their own lifespan of PCSing. In other words, they might identify with both the younger and older kids in the family because they felt that way when they were 8 years old and also when they were 14.)

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. What things can you identify with as the family faced the possibility of moving? Have you ever had a family vote? If so, what happened?
3. How much difference did it make that there were at least 10 other kids in the family going through the same thing? Does this help or hinder getting to connect to the neighborhood?
4. Talk about some of the good things the family did to adjust to moving. Now discuss some bad ideas used to deal with the move. Which ones have you experienced?

Group input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions.

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *To look at the transition experience of moving (again) through the eyes of various family members so that students can identify with one or several of the characters and their issues with leaving one home to establish another. When teens can identify reasons for their emotions and reactions towards PCSing through a fictional character, they can more easily develop some helping strategies for their next PCS, thus building personal and family resiliency.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

You may have a very different emotional reaction to moving than other people do, but I'm guessing you can find someone who approaches it like you. Some people get angry, some say 'suck it up and deal.' Some get excited about a new adventure, some are in denial, some get sad for the friends they'll leave, some get defiant against the military parent and want to make their life a nightmare, some are even-keeled and just go with the flow.

In the movie, there were a whole lot of kids moving at the same time. Although your family is probably not that large, what we get through these characters are different ways that they deal with the news about moving, the act of moving, trying (or not trying) to connect to the new neighborhood, and deciding on various strategies to explore within the family dynamics. We can see that not all strategies produce good results, and some of the tactics, though funny, actually undermine a family effort to connect to the new place.

There's a story in Scripture that you may be familiar with about a guy named Jonah who was asked by God to move. Jonah voted "NO" to that request and decided on a different strategy, which was to move somewhere else. His strategy failed. Here's what happened from Jonah 1:

¹ One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai.² He said,

"Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware of how wicked its people are."³ Jonah, however, set out in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD. He went to Joppa, where he found a ship about to go to Spain. He paid his fare and went aboard with the crew to sail to Spain, where he would be away from the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, and the storm was so violent that the ship was in danger of breaking up.⁵ The sailors were terrified and cried out for help, each one to his own god. Then, in order to lessen the danger, they threw the cargo overboard. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep.

⁶ The captain found him there and said to him,

What are you doing asleep? Get up and pray to your god for help. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and spare our lives.

⁷ The sailors said to each other,

Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger. They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn.⁸ So they said to him,

Now, then, tell us! Who is to blame for this? What are you doing here? What country do you come from? What is your nationality?

⁹ I am a Hebrew, Jonah answered.

I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made land and sea.

¹⁰ Jonah went on to tell them that he was running away from the LORD.

The sailors were terrified, and said to him,

That was an awful thing to do!¹¹ The storm was getting worse all the time, so the sailors asked him,

What should we do to you to stop the storm?

¹² Jonah answered,

Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I know it is my fault that you are caught in this violent storm.

¹³ Instead, the sailors tried to get the ship to shore, rowing with all their might. But the storm was becoming worse and worse, and they got nowhere.¹⁴ So they cried out to the LORD,

O LORD, we pray, don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! You, O LORD, are responsible for all this; it is your doing.

¹⁵ Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and it calmed down at once.¹⁶ This made the sailors so afraid of the LORD that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him.

¹⁷ At the LORD's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

After those days in the large fish, Jonah made the decision to obey God and go through with the original PCS plans to Nineveh. Once there, God used him to warn the people there and they turned from their disobedience and followed God – a really good thing! A huge city may have been destroyed if Jonah had not delivered that message from God. This move had a real purpose.

Sometimes you can't see the real purpose behind your next PCS, but give it time. God may actually be using the military to move you somewhere that really needs you and your family! As you look at various emotions you have toward PCSing and the strategies you currently use to make it work, you may find that discussing the move with God to discover his purposes gives you a whole new perspective. Remember, God understands you mobile lifestyle, and he wants you to trust him in the midst of the PCSing; every part of it.

Challenge:

1. Remember one of the positive strategies from the movie and discuss it with your friends and family about how you can use this during your next PCS.
2. If you're currently facing a PCS (preparing to go or just got here), let someone else know the emotions you're having about it; what's tough and what's OK?
3. Write out a prayer to God for his presence and help in your attitudes and your family's attitudes about the next PCS, and pray it each day for the next week.

Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of a family PCS-Here We Go Again.