

**a Small-Group Study of**

—The—  
**Four Corners**

by C.S. El

**PREVIEW**



A Faith-based Family Study of *The Four Corners* by C.S. Elston  
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The Four Corners is a brilliantly told, imaginative story about the importance of love and family. This faith-based study is intended to be a companion to the book and emphasize its themes of appreciating differences in each other along with finding strength in a unified goal through entertaining and engaging activities. The study can be used in an individual family or small group setting.

All Scripture references were made using *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society but any translation can be used to complete the study and will not alter the meaning.

The artwork used throughout this study is the same artwork found in the novel. A special thanks to Madison McClean whose artistic renderings grace the pages of both.

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## **WEEK ONE: God's Plan For The Family**

### **Preparation: Read section one, "Of Interest."**

#### Discussion Questions

1. What is your definition of a family?
2. Read Genesis 2:19-25, Matthew 19:4-6, and Ephesians 5:22-32. What stands out in these verses that make it clear God's plan, from the beginning, was for a marriage to be a holy union of mutual love and respect?
3. Read Ephesians 6:1-4. What do these verses tell us about God's framework for the relationship between children and their parents? Children, what does it mean to obey your parents? Parents, how can you bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord without exasperating them or provoking them to anger?
4. Colossians 4:6 tells us about how we are required to communicate with everyone? How do you feel the Snyders do a good job of this? Where do they fall short? How can you be better about this with the people in your life and, in particular, your own family?
5. What does Psalm 128 promise us is the result of a family whose commitment is centered on the Lord and His plan for that family?

#### **Group Activity Instructions**

##### Things You'll Need

- Large bowl
  - M&Ms or other multi-colored candy
  - Small paper cups
1. Assign a topic to each color of M&M. For example, red might be hobbies, yellow could be favorite foods, green might be favorite vacation, blue could be the character in the book one finds most easily relatable, orange might be the favorite moment in the book so far, and brown could be life's most memorable or embarrassing moment.
  2. Place the M&Ms in a large bowl in the center of the group. There should be enough M&Ms for each person to tell four or five things about themselves.

3. Have each person take a cup full of M&Ms. You could choose to add an element of surprise by not telling them why until they have their cupful. However, make sure people do not eat their candy until after they have used the color.
4. Move around the group in a circle, having each person tell something related to a color of M&M in their cup. Once they have answered the question, they can eat their M&M of that color so that the next time around they have to use a different topic. If you want to make the game last longer and get into more detail, you can, on certain questions, require an answer/story for each piece of candy of a certain color. For example, if the color is red, using the example above, then a person with four red M&Ms might have to share four hobbies that they enjoy.
5. End by eating the remainder of the candy. Conclude on a sweet note with everyone getting another cup full of candy to enjoy without elaboration.





## **WEEK TWO: When Families Deviate From God's Plan**

### **Preparation: Read section two, "The Disappearance."**

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read Genesis chapter three. What caused the first family to do things their way instead of God's? Discuss the extreme consequences of that decision and be mindful of the fact that we are still suffering the results of it.
2. Read Genesis 4:6-7. Even the first family was dysfunctional. What does God say is the way to fix that?
3. What does 1 Corinthians 7:17 tell us about where the Snyders may have begun to walk away from God's plan for their family?
4. Read Malachi 2:13-16, Matthew 5:32, and Mark 10:11-12. How seriously does God take the marriage oath? What is His view on divorce?
5. Children, what do your parents do to show you they love you? What do they do to show you they love each other? If Grant and Jill had done these things, how would Kinsey's life have been different?

### **Group Activity Instructions**

#### Things You'll Need

- Stack of magazine cut-outs of people (individuals - not in pairs or groups)
  - Posterboard (1 sheet per family)
  - Glue (at least 1 per family)
  - Markers (at least 1 per family)
1. Each family selects cut-outs of people to represent the different members of their family.
  2. The families then glue the cut-outs on the posterboard in a circle or square shape with significant space between each member.
  3. Each person then takes turns drawing an arrow from their cut-out to the cut-out of another family member and writing an action word (i.e., hug, kiss, respect, etc.) that reflects how they should/will treat that person.
  4. When everyone is done, each family presents their board to the group.