

LESSON 54

Love

1 CORINTHIANS 12:30–14:1



BIBLE TRUTH

LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT OF ALL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Corinthians 12:30—14:1 from the Scriptures or read story 132, “Love,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

I Love Skit

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

A Noisy Gong

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ set of cymbals, a cymbal on a stand and a drumstick, or a gong and a mallet (two large pot lids will work in a pinch)

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 54—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Take a Look at the Flaws

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ magnifying glass or microscope
- ✓ newsprint

TOTAL 95 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Love is required—The Corinthians were using the spiritual gifts to proudly show off. At the same time they were sinning by being immoral and by suing one another in court (1 Corinthians 5—6). Although Paul encouraged the Corinthians to pursue spiritual gifts, he interrupted his discussion of the gifts to teach the greatest gift of all—love. He emphasized that love should guide how we use all our gifts. Even if you were the most gifted person in the world, without love you would be only a “noisy gong” (1 Corinthians 13:1). Love is the most important gift of all and the one gift that is required no matter what other gifts God has given you.

Love is more than words—Love is cheapened today by the way we use it to describe how we feel about things we enjoy. We say we love pizza, candy, the beach, and a million other things. But Paul’s description of love here in 1 Corinthians is not about feelings; it is about sacrifice and service and originates in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (1 John 4:10). While love is a God glorifying emotion, Paul doesn’t say love is wonderful, delightful, or intense. Love demonstrates a godly action toward another that requires sacrifice on our part. God is the one who defined love as sacrifice by giving up his one and only Son.

Love never ends—Paul tells us that all the other gifts are going to end, but the one gift that will never end is love. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will pass away, but love, he says, “never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:8). In heaven, sin will be destroyed, and we will all live in perfect love toward one another and toward God. The theme of heaven is love. Perhaps there is no greater earthly expression of the love of Christ than when someone sacrifices for another. When we do, whether we realize it or not, we are honoring the sacrifice of Jesus, the author of love.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Quotations from 1 Corinthians 13 might sound wonderful at a wedding ceremony, but without an understanding of the gospel and its connection to Paul's words, the chapter cannot be fully appreciated. The gospel defines and gives meaning to love. The Bible tells us, "God is love." And the apostle John in 1 John 4:8–11 describes God's demonstration of love as the death of his Son on the cross. John goes on to explain that the cross should be our reason for loving one another.

When we demonstrate the kind of sacrificial love Paul describes, we point to the ultimate sacrifice and demonstration of love: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Corinthians 12:30–14:1 from the Scriptures or read story 132, "Love," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

I Love Skit

The purpose of this skit is to help demonstrate how we have overused and cheapened the word love. Use the following dialogue or simply ad-lib your own version. Enlist the help of another adult helper.

MARK: Hey Ed, isn't your birthday tomorrow?
ED: Yes, it is.
MARK: I love birthdays. What are you going to do?
ED: My mom is having a birthday party for me.
MARK: I love parties. Hey, I wasn't invited.
ED: This is just a small family gathering. It's a family tradition.
MARK: I love family traditions. We blow birthdays out of proportion you know. So what are your family traditions?
ED: Well, that's my problem. Each year on our birthday we get to pick our favorite meal and I don't know what to pick. I was thinking of picking pizza.
MARK: Oh, I love pizza. What are your other choices?
ED: Well, I really like steak, but it is so exp...
MARK: *(interrupting)* Oh, steak. I love steak, especially a good filet. I love a good filet.
ED: Then there's my mom's chicken parm.
MARK: Tough choice. I've had your mom's chicken parmesan. I love your mom's chicken parmesan.
ED: Well, whatever I choose it will be good. One thing I don't have to worry about. I always get double chocolate cheesecake for desert.
MARK: *(licking his lips)* Double chocolate cheesecake. I love double chocolate cheesecake!
ED: Is there anything you don't love?
MARK: Sure, lima beans.
 Skit ends.

Talk to the class about the real meaning of love and how all love points back to the sacrifice of Jesus.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 15 MIN

A Noisy Gong

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ set of cymbals, a cymbal on a stand and a drumstick, or a gong and a mallet
 (two large pot lids will work in a pinch)

Enlist a volunteer to come into the class with the cymbals after the main teaching, and make a racket. In spite of objections, the volunteer should continue making noise until it is pretty offensive.

Finally, give the volunteer a predetermined signal to stop, and then have them leave the room. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1 again and ask the children if they have a greater appreciation for what Paul was talking about.

We may be the most gifted folks in the whole church, but if we use our gifts to boast in our own ability it is just like the noise of the cymbals and it helps no one.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 54—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is the father in the picture doing?**
(He is giving a hug to his daughter.)
- **What word from today's lesson would you use to describe what the father is showing toward his daughter?**
(love)
- **What kind of words does the Bible use to tell us how to show others love?**
(Love is when you demonstrate patience, kindness, trust, and joy toward another person not based on what they do but just because you want to.)
- **How did God demonstrate his love for us?**
(God has demonstrated his love to us in many ways, including giving us everything we have, but the greatest demonstration of his love was in sending Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Take a Look at the Flaws

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ magnifying glass or microscope
- ✓ newsprint

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate that even things that seem to be perfect are really full of flaws. Only Jesus is perfect. Even our best works are stained with sin (see Isaiah 64:6).

Pass the newsprint around to the class and ask them to describe the letters. Help them describe the way they look, as neat or sloppy, crisp or rough. Then place the newsprint under the microscope or magnifier to expose all the flaws of the letters. Give everyone a chance to look and then draw out the class with the following questions:

- **How did your thoughts about the printed letters change when you saw them under the microscope?**
- **How are these letters like our lives?**
(Often others look pretty good on the outside. However, if we could see people's hearts—their motives and sin—we would know that no one is perfect regardless of how put together they seem.)
- **How are these letters like our good deeds?**
(Our good deeds seem righteous but often we perform them for selfish reasons because we want to look good. Our motives are mixed.)
- **Who is the only perfect person?**
(Jesus is the only perfect person who never sinned.)
- **What would a letter that represented the perfect life of Jesus look like under the microscope?**
(A letter representing Jesus would be perfect, regardless of how much it was magnified.)

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