

LESSON 54

Love

1 CORINTHIANS 13



BIBLE TRUTH

LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT OF ALL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: Optional: whiteboard, dry erase marker

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 132)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 54—one for each child; markers or crayons

Love Is

SUPPLIES: red hearts to keep track of team scores

Clanging Cymbal

SUPPLIES: cymbal on a stand (In a pinch you could use two large cooking pot lids);
drumstick

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn the characteristics of biblical love.

Start the class by asking the children what love is. Discuss their responses briefly. Continue by pointing out that sometimes we say we love things like ice cream and candy. Ask the class what other things people say they love. (pizza, amusement parks, football, etc.)

Then read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 a phrase at a time, asking the children what the Bible says love is. Then ask the children if you can be patient with pizza or be kind to football. (The answer of course is no.) So biblical love is a love expressed between people. When we say we love pizza, we really mean we greatly enjoy it because it gives us pleasure. Biblical love is not so much about getting, but giving.

The Bible tells us that Jesus loved us by coming to die on the cross for our sins (1 John 4:10). Jesus demonstrated the greatest love by giving his life for us. So we also demonstrate love by giving to others. Ask the children to name some things we give others to demonstrate love. (Point them back to the passage. We can give others kindness, patience, humility, etc.)

Take time to pray and thank God for loving us as much as he does. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 132, "Love," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What is Paul talking about in this passage?**
(Paul is saying that love is the most important gift of God that we can use to bless one another.)
- **What is a person like who can do many things but doesn't have love?**
(He is like a clanging gong or cymbal.)

- **Why would God compare a person who does not have love with a clanging gong or cymbal?**

(A clanging gong is noisy and nobody really wants to listen to it no matter how nice it might look.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

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

- **Who does the Bible say we are to love first?**

(According to Deuteronomy 6:5, first we are to love God.)

- **Who does the Bible say we are to love in addition to God?**

(The Bible tells us to love our brother [1 John 4:21], our neighbor [Matthew 19:19], and our enemies [Matthew 5:44].)

- **Is there anyone we should not love?**

(No. The Bible tells us we are to love everyone because we are all made in the image of God. We don't have to love the bad things that evil people do, but we must love our enemies. We can love our enemies by praying that God would change their hearts.)

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).

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

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.)

Love Is

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ red hearts to keep track of team scores

Review the list of the characteristics of love from 1 Corinthians 13:4–8. Divide the room into two teams. Assign an adult helper to each group to help feed clues to their team. Ask the groups if they can remember the different ways Paul describes

love in the passage and then explain what it means. If they come up with a correct characteristic give them a red heart as a tangible expression of their score. The helpers can give one clue to their team to help them remember a characteristic. If they cannot guess one the other team gets a chance. The helpers can keep giving one clue per turn until one team guesses a correct answer. When you have finished going through the list, the game is over. Count up the red hearts to determine the winner. Then review with the class any characteristics they missed.

Clanging Cymbal

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ cymbal on a stand (or two large pot lids)
- ✓ drumstick

Give the cymbal or pot lids to a helper, and have her come into the class just after it begins and announce that she would like to encourage you and the class. At first, she can share a few nice words, but as she continues she should freely pound on the cymbal or smash the pot lids together to create a lot of noise. The clanging should go on long enough for the children to go from experiencing shock and amusement to annoyance. (A note of caution: Don't get too loud for too long as the noise could actually be harmful in a closed classroom.) The object is to illustrate 1 Corinthians 13:1. Once the kids look like they would like an end to the noise, have the volunteer end by saying, "I hope that really encourages you!" and leave the room.

Ask the children if they felt encouraged by the words of the person who stopped in. They will likely mention the noise and how it was even hard to hear what was said. At that point you can read 1 Corinthians 13 again and help them make the connection to love. A person might be gifted, but if he does not have love, his actions will not be received well. Ask the children if they know what the greatest demonstration of love was. Read 1 John 4:10–13 to the children from your Bible.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 54 - LOVE

