

LESSON 76

Loving One Another

1 JOHN 3:11-18



BIBLE TRUTH

THE GOSPEL IS OUR MOTIVE TO LOVE

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 John 3:9–24 from the Scriptures or read story 154, “Loving One Another,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Give a Gift to Get a Gift

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ beautifully wrapped empty gift box

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Memorize This Passage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

This Is Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Worldly Love versus Gospel-Motivated Love Skits

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

True love flows from the gospel—Brotherly love is one of the main themes of John’s first letter. Those who have been brought into the family of God demonstrate their love for God by their love for their brothers and sisters in Christ (1 John 3:10). The motivation for that love flows out of what Jesus did for us (1 John 3:16). John uses the story of Cain and Abel as an illustration. As believers, we are to reject the behavior of Cain, who killed his brother. John reminds us that murder begins long before we kill, when we hold hatred in our heart against our brother for something he has done (1 John 3:15). So, while loving our brothers is evidence of God’s grace in our lives, hating our brothers is the opposite of love and an indication that we are still dead in our sins.

True love marks our conversion—When we love and serve one another, it shows that we are true Christians (1 John 3:10, 19). In fact, John puts our acts of love toward one another right up there with believing in Jesus. We don’t love one another to earn our salvation; we love one another because of what Jesus did for us and because he commands us to do so. If we truly love Jesus then we will love others, and if we are sacrificing our time to serve others we should be confident that God’s grace is upon us.

True love demands action—John knows that saying “I love you” is easier than demonstrating love by actions. That is why he challenges us to love with actions, not just words (1 John 3:18). In fact, if we ignore a brother in need it should concern us and cause us to wonder if the love of God is in us (1 John 3:17).

A little later John makes this crystal clear: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:20–21). If we claim to be a Christian but do not love one another, we lie. That strong language is not designed to discourage us but to help us. If we are consistently loving our brothers then we know God is working in us; it is wonderful evidence of God’s salvation in our hearts.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The First Letter of John

John's first letter was addressed and written to Christians in general but does not mention any specific group by name. It is likely a letter meant to circulate among the churches. Historians place John in Ephesus during much of his last years of ministry, prior to being exiled. These same historians attribute this letter to John. The letter itself does not indicate who the author was; however, it contains similar phrases to those in John's gospel and begins in a similar fashion. The Gospel of John begins, "In the beginning was the Word," while 1 John begins, "That which was from the beginning."

Where Is the Gospel?

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

Both John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16 tell us that God's plan of salvation was motivated by his love for us. Out of his great love Jesus laid down his life and took on himself the wrath of God that we deserved for our sins.

Understanding the gospel, then, is the foundational reason why we should love one another. We don't love people because they love us, or because they have done nice things for us, or because we want to try to get them to love us back. If we love like that, then when they stop loving us, or stop giving to us, or refuse our love, we will stop trying to love them. But if our motive for love is centered in what Jesus did on the cross, then we can love them in spite of their rejection and even if we receive nothing in return. That is gospel love.

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 John 3:9–24 from the Scriptures or read story 154, “Loving One Another,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Give a Gift to Get a Gift

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ beautifully wrapped empty gift box

When the class arrives, show them the beautifully wrapped gift. Tell the class that you are planning to give it to a friend. (Really ham this up.) Say that you always give your friend a gift for their birthday so that they feel obligated to give you a gift for your birthday. Tell the class that you only give gifts to people who give gifts back to you. What is more, you look for people who like to give gifts and you give each of them a gift on their birthday. But you give gifts that don't cost much—something on sale or something from the dollar store. That way you come out way ahead. You only need to spend a little money, but when your birthday rolls around you get all these wonderful gifts.

Then read today's Scripture and teach the lesson. Once you have covered the main idea, ask the following questions related to your view of gifts:

- Does my behavior agree or disagree with what John teaches in today's passage?
(*It disagrees because your giving is not motivated by the gospel but by your desire to get something.*)

■ **What should I do differently?**

(The gospel—that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross to take away your sins—should be the motive for your giving. You should give gifts to people because you love them, not just because they will give you a gift in return.)

■ **Who am I placing at the center of my giving?**

(You are placing yourself at the center of your giving. You are giving so that in the end you will be blessed.)

■ **Who should be at the center of my giving?**

(Jesus should be at the center of your giving.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

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

OBJECT LESSON 2 **15 MIN**

Memorize This Passage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Write 1 John 3:16 on the whiteboard and read it aloud with the class. Tell the class that this is one of the four “3:16” verses that are important to memorize. Take time to review each one, especially John 3:16. (The others are Colossians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16.)

Ask the following questions:

- **What do John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16 have in common?**
- **What do Colossians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16 have in common?**

Memorize 1 John 3:16 by erasing one word at a time until everyone can say it without looking at it. As the teaching session continues ask students at random if they can recite the verse.

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

This Is Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Have the class draw a picture of the cross of Christ on a hill with the crosses of the thieves to the left and right. Then write the words “This is love” across the top of the page.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Worldly Love versus Gospel-Motivated Love Skits

Read through the Bible passage for today and teach the students about gospel-motivated love. Then divide the class into four groups to act out one of the following skits.

1. Kids talk together about all the different things they love. The object of this skit is to show just how many things we say we love.
2. A group of kids talk about different passages in the Bible that have meant a lot to them.
3. A group of kids, on their way to buy some ice cream, come across a homeless person lying in the street, hurt. They say kind things to him but then are afraid to get involved and they continue on their way.
4. A group of kids, on their way to buy some ice cream, come across a homeless person lying in the street, hurt. They help him sit up and draw him out about his situation. He tells them

that he was visiting his granddaughter when he got lost and was mugged. The kids ask for the granddaughter's address, call a taxi, and, abandoning plans to buy ice cream, pay the driver to take the man home. They give him an invitation to church as well.

After each group performs their skit, talk about what thoughts went through their minds as they prepared their skit.