

# Let Us Love One Another

Grades  
**5-6**

## BELOVED • EASTER 5 • YEAR B

1 JOHN 4:7-21



### What is happening in this story?

This text is best seen as the explanation to Jesus' commandment to "love one another, just as I have loved you" from John 13:34. First John emphasizes that it has always been God who loved us first because God is love. Love begins with God. Our love for one another is only possible because we have first known God's love for us. If we do not show love for one another, we do not fully know or understand God.

### Why does this story matter for kids?

"Abiding in God's love" is a tough concept to understand and might be explained to kids as knowing what God wants and doing what God wants in all areas of our lives. God wants us to love others because God is love, so when we act in love of others we are "abiding in God's love and God is abiding in us." Further, acting out of love toward everyone is a difficult task, as most kids will know. It helps to tell kids first that, of course, it's a hard task; second, when we love others, it shows others who God is, because God is love.

### What is the lectionary connection?

In the months that follow Easter, we try to make sense of the resurrection message. This is a great scripture, geared for the early church, which sums up the message of Christ: "Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." This is a great exploration of why and how to do that.

### AGE LEVEL TIP

At this age, the word *love* can elicit giggles, snickers, and all manner of blushing and squirming. Let as much of this go as you can, provided it doesn't get out of control. Use this lesson to help the kids see that love is deeper than what they see on TV or in movies.



### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens
- Pencils
- Colored pencils
- Clear tape
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

### LESSON SUPPLIES

- Shiny heart sticker
- Magazines with many pictures of people
- Mural paper
- Sticky notes (2 in. x 2 in.)

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Write the words “God is . . .” on a large piece of mural paper and tape it to the wall. Set out several pads of sticky notes. Ask kids to write down one-word descriptions of “God” and stick the notes to the mural paper. Have them write as many notes as they want, but only one word on each sticky note.

## Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today’s date, church season, color, and icon. This is the fifth Sunday of the Easter season. The color remains the same. **As we move farther away from Easter Day, we begin to see how Christ’s victory over death sets the tone for our relationship, not only with God, but also with each other. Today we’re going to spend some time exploring how God’s love for us, shown to us through Christ, gives us a model for loving other people.** Then stick a big shiny heart sticker to the Wall Chart on today’s wedge.

**It’s still the Easter season, we can still say, “Happy Easter!” As we really get today started, repeat after me: Christ is risen! (pause) We love because God first loved us!** Try it a couple of times until everyone gets the hang of it.

## Pass out leaflets and pens or pencils.

On your leaflet, write at least three short definitions for the word *love*. Remember that *love* can be either a noun or a verb! Try to be as accurate and as creative as you can: The person with the largest number of original answers wins!

Give kids a few minutes to write their one- or two-word definitions for *love*. Then go around and have each kid read an answer for the rest of the group; let the group decide if the definition is accurate. If anyone else has the same answer, they should cross it out. At the end, see who has any “original” choices remaining and applaud them.

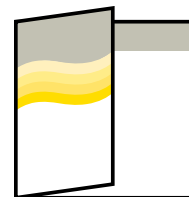
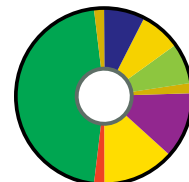
## Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

If nothing else, these definitions show us there are a lot of ways to understand love. On one hand, love can be really—really—complicated. On the other, love is pretty simple. But “simple” doesn’t mean it’s easy. Let’s watch this video.

View Episode 11, “Tough Love,” on the Whirl Year B Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What message is Ruby trying to get across to Leo?
- How can “forgiveness” be the same thing as “love”?
- Did you ever hurt someone else? Did that person forgive you?
- How does it make you feel when someone forgives you?
- Should Leo forgive Burt? Why or why not?



## Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find 1 John 4:7-21.

Do the Easter 5 Preview Activity together on page 1448 and compare responses.

Read 1 John 4:7-21 in this creative way together: Begin reading with a volunteer, and have kids switch readers around the table/circle/room every time someone reads the word *love* (or a derivative), even if it's in the middle of a sentence. This will require everyone to pay close attention and read along. Read it again if time allows.



## Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How does the author address his audience? What does that show about his relationship with them?
- How many times did the word *love* appear? What does that tell you about how important it is?
- What do you think the author means in verse 12? What else do you think he is trying to say?
- How can fear keep you from loving?
- Does this scripture remind you of anything else in the Bible? (Matthew 12:46-50; 22:36-40)

### BIBLE BIT

- Not much is known about the intended audience of 1 John.
- That may be why it's known by the author's name instead of by a reference to the target audience (as with 1 and 2 Corinthians).

### WATCH IT AGAIN

- Even though this video is mostly about Leo and Burt, pay close attention to Ruby.
- How many different ways does Ruby model "perfect love"?

### OUR CHURCH

- Is there a person or group in your church that seems disconnected from the larger community? Look for ways you can show them that they are loved.

# RESPOND 10

**Open leaflets and pass out colored pencils, scissors, glue sticks, markers and magazines.**

Tear off leaflet square.

1. Give the “Me” hair and other features so that it looks like you.
2. In each of the five hearts, find a picture in a magazine (or draw a picture) to represent a person from each of the categories. You can draw a symbol to represent God in the “God Heart.”
3. How do you know they love you? Write down the answer in each arrow pointing at you.
4. In the “Someone I love” arrow, write a way that person knows that *they* are loved *by you*!
5. If you have extra time, use extra space on the page to write down other ways you know you are loved, and other ways you can show love to other people.

## LAUNCH 10

**Circle up with kids for a quick review.**

So far, we know that *love* has many different definitions. After reading the scripture and watching the video, what else can we say about love? Take time to hear kids’ responses.

So to know love is to know God. Because God loves us, we should love others.

**Return to the leaflet panels and pass out colored pencils.**

God rains down perfect love on us, but a wall of *fear* can keep us from loving others. How can God’s love toward you become a tool to help you get over, under, or through your own wall of fear? Think of a tool—or make one up—and draw it working to get rid of fear.

**Send kids out.**

Gather the group in a circle and have them cross their arms, right over left, and join hands with the people beside them. **Remember our opening ritual? Repeat after me: Christ is risen! (pause) We love because God first loved us!**

Pray together: **Dear God, we give you thanks for loving us and for giving us the strength to love others. Amen.**

**Now, continue holding each other’s hands—loosely—and unwrap yourselves.** If everyone has their arms the same way (right over left), you’ll be able to maintain contact with each other as your circle faces outward and you dismiss the group.

Thank kids for being willing to love the way God loves them. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.