

What Does God's Love Look Like?

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Introduction

You all know what a dictionary is for, right? It gives you definitions of words. Well, there's a cool definition in the Bible for "love"!

Today we're going to look that up and learn how God wants us to show love to others.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You have commanded us to love one another. You even ask us to love our enemies. But, sometimes we get selfish and forget to be loving towards others. Teach us how to love others in the same way that You describe in 1 Corinthians 13. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Lesson

This is our last lesson in the Showing God's Love series that we've been doing for the past 12 weeks. Tell me what you have learned? What does it mean to love others? [Teacher, let the children share their ideas.] We show God's love by being compassionate, forgiving others, using kind words, being a cheerful giver, by cooperating with others.

But maybe you've heard songs on the radio or seen movies on TV that give you the idea that love is just a warm, exciting feeling. Perhaps you have read stories about people who love somebody until

they get tired of loving that person; then they find somebody else to love. Is this what real love is? No!

The world is giving all of us a distorted view of what real, true love is. As you listen to music, watch TV, read some magazines, or watch some people, you may very well be getting the wrong idea of what it means to love people with God's kind of love.

Many people think that love is just a feeling: "*That person makes me feel special; it must be love!*" Or, they think that love is based on performance: "*If I just do something nice for that person, then they'll like me and want to be my friend.*"

But true love is not conditional like that. Your parents love you all the time, even when you're naughty, don't they? Oh, you may disappoint them or hurt their feelings, but they never stop loving you. True love is not a temporary thing that you can easily turn *on* and *off*.

If you want to learn what love really is, you need to look at God. The Bible says, "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8). God's love for you is a picture of perfect love.

God's love for you is not just a warm feeling. God's love for you does not depend on your love for Him or what you can *do* for Him. God doesn't love you because you are so loveable, for in many ways you are not!

God loves you because He chooses to love you; it is a decision He has made. None of us deserves God's love; still He chooses to love you and me. And God has done something to show His love. He gave the most precious gift He could give—His own life! The Lord Jesus Christ died for you to take away your punishment for sin forever. The Bible says, "*But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5:8). Believing this wonderful truth allows you to become part of God's family.

Once we are members of God's family, God wants us to love others. We are to *choose* to love others—not because of how we feel about them or because they love us. Rather, we are to choose to love them because of God's love for us. When we choose to love others, we show that love by our actions.

First Corinthians 13 tells us what it means to know and to show God's kind of love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud (5) or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. (6) It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. (7) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (8) Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!

[Teacher, have the children brainstorm with you what each one of these love qualities means. Write their ideas on the board.]

God's kind of love...

- is willing to wait patiently and kindly for others
- doesn't get jealous of others because of who they are or what they have
- is not rude to others
- puts others people first—not me first
- doesn't get angry easily and want to get even
- doesn't keep track of wrong things others do
- doesn't look for and think about the bad in others; it looks for and thinks about the good in them
- protects and defends others
- trusts and has confidence in others
- expects good things for others

- keeps on loving without complaining or quitting
- never lets down – never stops loving

Jesus came to earth to show us God's kind of love.

- Jesus is patient and kind.
- His actions toward you are always right.
- He delights in who you are.
- He takes pleasure in meeting your needs.
- He wants to forgive, not get even.
- He chooses not to remember the wrongs that you do.
- He sees your potential – the good that can develop in you.
- He has confidence in what He can do through you.
- He never lets anything get in the way of His love for you.
- He protects and defends you.
- His love for you never disappoints; it is forever.

How about you? If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, do you love others with God's kind of love? Try putting your own name in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Are these qualities true in your life? [Teacher, use Student Worksheet.]

- Your Name takes turns patiently without getting upset.
- Your Name doesn't get jealous of a friend's new clothes.
- Your Name doesn't show off or act as if others don't matter.
- Your Name is polite and respectful to parents and teachers.
- Your Name lets someone else have the biggest piece.
- Your Name doesn't call someone names to get back at him.
- Your Name doesn't stay angry at someone for what he did.
- Your Name looks for good in someone others say is bad.
- Your Name stands up for someone whom others pick on.
- Your Name believes that God can change difficult people.
- Your Name encourages others to do and be their best.
- Your Name chooses to love others even when they disappoint.
- Your Name refuses to give up on someone, no matter what.

Jesus wants us to love others. Let's pray and ask Him to help us love others more.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for your great love that You have shown towards us. Help us to let Your kind of love show through our lives this week towards others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

To help you remember everything that love is, make this rolling reminder:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13 and make a list of the words that the Bible uses to describe love.
2. Write each word in a different section of a soccer ball or print them on address stickers and adhere them to the ball.
3. Have the children form a circle and bounce the ball to each other.
4. Whatever words the catcher's right thumb lands on when he catches the ball, have him say: "[myname] is patient," or "[myname] is kind," and so forth.

[For more lessons for children, visit
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