

Growing in Love

Lesson Scripture: Luke 23:26-46; John 19:25-27

Bible Truth: My love can grow.

Bible Story: Luke 23:26-46; John 19:25-27

Bible Verse: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7, NIV)

FOCUS

Learning Activity: “God Loves You”

Preparation

None

Presentation

As the children arrive, ask them to draw something or someone they love. When the time comes to start the session, ask each child to share what they drew.

Materials
paper
crayons or pencils
“Christian” tree poster from
Lesson 1

Say: **In our last lesson, we learned that God wants Christian boys and girls to have nine specific traits in their lives.** Refer to the “Christian” tree poster from the last lesson. **Today, we are going to learn about the first trait- love. God wants us to love everyone. It is easy to love our friends and our families, but God also wants us to love our enemies.**

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: 1 John 4:7

Preparation

Write 1 John 4:7 on a poster board.

Cut out five paper hearts for each group of 4 children. Write the phrases and reference from the memory verse on each group of hearts as listed below:

1st heart: Dear friends, let us love one another,

2nd heart: for love comes from God.

Materials
poster board
marker
red construction paper
scissors

3rd heart: Everyone who loves has been born of God,
4th heart: and knows God.
5th heart: 1 John 4:7

Explanation

Read 1 John 4:7 with the children. Ask them to find the answers to the following questions in the verse. When a child discovers the answer, ask him/her to stand in the front and underline the answer with a marker.

What commandment does God give us in this verse? (Love one another.)

Where does love come from? (God)

What two things do we know about people who show love? (They have been born of God and they know God.)

Memorization Activity

Divide children into groups of 4. Give each group a set of prepared hearts. Ask them to arrange their hearts in the correct order and practice saying the verse together. Say: **Let's see if we can say the verse without looking at some of the words. Turn over the third heart.** Practice saying the verse with the children with the third heart turned over to the blank side. **Now, turn over the fifth heart.** Practice saying the verse with the children with the fifth heart turned over to the blank side. Continue asking groups to turn over their hearts and practice saying the verse until they can say it with all of the hearts turned over to the blank side.

INSTRUCT

Bible Story: "Jesus Loved Everyone," Luke 23:26-46; John 19:25-27

Preparation

Read and study Luke 23:26-46; John 19:25-27.

Cut three hearts out of red construction paper for each child. Write one of the following words on each heart: friends/family, enemies, sinners.

Give each child a set of three hearts.

Materials
Bible
paper (red construction paper
if possible)
marker or crayon

Presentation

Say: **The first trait that God wants to see in Christians is love. When did Jesus show His love for us in a big way?** Allow children to answer. **Yes, when He died on the cross, He showed His love for us. On that day, Jesus also showed us who He wants us to love, and how He wants us to love them. I am going to tell you about three things Jesus did while He was on the cross. Listen and decide if He was showing love to His friends and family, His enemies, or sinners in each part of the story. When you know the correct answer, show me the heart with the correct word.**

Story 1

Say: **As the oldest son of Joseph and Mary, it was Jesus' job to take care of his mother when she got older. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He knew that he wouldn't be able to take care of Mary. He loved her very much and wanted to be sure someone took care of her. His disciple, John, was standing with Mary watching Jesus on this sad day. From the cross, Jesus asked John to take care of Mary. The Bible tells us that from that day, John took care of Mary as if she were his own mother. Was Jesus showing love to his friends/family, sinners, or enemies in this story?** Ask children to display the correct heart. (friends/family)

Story 2

Say: **Two other men were put on crosses next to Jesus on the day that he died. They had both done very bad things. One of the men laughed at Jesus and made fun of him. The other man realized that he was a sinner and that Jesus was God's son. He wanted Jesus to forgive him of his sins. Jesus promised this man that He would go to heaven. Was Jesus showing love to his friends/family, sinners, or enemies?** Ask children to display the correct heart. (sinners)

Story 3

Say: **Jesus had done nothing wrong, and yet he was being put to death. The soldiers hurt him, took His clothes, and made fun of Him. As Jesus was on the cross He prayed a special prayer. He asked God to forgive those people who were hurting Him and killing Him. Was Jesus showing love to his friends/family, sinners, or enemies?** Ask children to display the correct heart. (enemies)

Say: **As He was dying, Jesus showed love to everyone. He wants us to have this same kind of love in our lives, even when it is hard.**

APPLICATION

Learning Activity: Creative writing, "Love Is an Action"

Preparation

Divide a sheet of paper into three sections. Write one of the following words at the top of each section: friends, family, enemies.

Materials
paper
markers or crayons

Presentation

Say: **Jesus showed His love for people with His actions. How did he love is family? Allow a child to answer. Yes, he asked John to take care of Mary. He loved with His words. How did he love His enemies? Allow a child to answer. Yes, He loved them by praying for them. He wants us to love people with our words and our actions.**

Give each child a prepared sheet of paper and markers or crayons. Ask children to make a list of ways they can love their friends, families, and enemies in the correct column of their paper. Encourage them to be specific. You may need to discuss specific examples, such as cleaning their room to show love to their mom or saying something nice to a person at school who has been mean to them. If children cannot write words, allow them to draw pictures of themselves showing love.

MINISTRY TIME

Preparation

Place a small basket at the bottom of the "Christian" tree poster used in Lesson 1.

Presentation

Ask children to put their papers in the basket. Say:

When you begin to love people by doing the things you wrote on your paper, your love will grow.

Take any fruit-shaped papers with the word "love" written on them (located at the bottom of the poster from Lesson 1) and move them from the bottom of the poster into the tree.

Materials
papers created during the "Love is an Action" activity
small basket
"Christian" tree poster from Lesson 1

Let's pray and ask God to help us love others by doing the things we wrote on our papers. Say a prayer with the children.