



SACRIFICIAL LOVE

Disciples & Early Church • U4#4 1st-3rd Gr. • Oct.13, 2024

Concept

Jesus demonstrated perfect love when He came to earth and died for our sins.

Goal

Students will learn that the Holy Spirit teaches us, changes us and empowers us to love the way Jesus does.

Passage

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Key Verse: "This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you." John 15:12

Planning Ahead

| Lesson Supplies | Craft Supplies |
|-----------------|---|
| | <p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Big Book of Bible Learning, Gilbert Beers</i>• Coupon book cover sheets on cardstock, 1/student• Blank coupon sheets, one 8 ½" x 11"/student• Stapler with staples• Crayons• Markers |

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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"Love 1. A strong, warm feeling for another; deep affection." [1] Indeed, with the egoism, autonomy and "self-ism" of our society, love is no more than a conditional feeling that comes and goes. Biblical love, on the other hand, is a choice. It is sacrificial and unconditional. Jesus demonstrated this love by becoming a man (1 John 3:16). It came with great sacrifice. For in so doing, He gave up not only the environment of the Godhead and His position as Ruler, but also the use of His divine attributes and perfect relationship with the Father and the Spirit. This is known as the "Kenosis" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Christ's love for us is not grounded in our loveliness, but in his own character. His love is not merely sentimental, yet it is charged with incalculable affection and warmth. It is resolute in its self-sacrifice, but never merely mechanical self-discipline. If we wish to come to terms with the apostolic depiction of Christian love as 'the most excellent way.' (1 Cor. 12:31b) that all believers must follow, we need only imitate Jesus Christ." [2]

What awesome, incomprehensible LOVE!

Additional reading: Philippians 2:3-8; John 13:1-17; Matthew 25:37-40; Romans 12:10; Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 Peter 1:22

[1] Macmillan Dictionary for Children, ©1977, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., p. 377.

[2] D.A. Carson, For the Love of God, © 1998 by D.A. Carson, Crossway Books, Sept. 8.

Set Up

Coordinate with other classes to combine for the Drama.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity Stations:

- **Craft—Coupon Books**
 - **Instructions:** Cut the How Can I Serve Coupon Book covers apart along the dotted lines. Give each student a cover and one sheet of paper divided into 6 rectangles. Have the students think of a person to whom they would like to show love. Have them cut the coupons apart along the dotted lines. Fold the cover along the solid line. Fold the coupons along the dotted lines and put them inside the cover. Staple cover and coupons along the fold to fasten the coupons inside the cover. Have them write their name on the line beside "FROM" and the name of the person to whom they will give it on the "TO" line. On one side only of each rectangle have students draw and/or write something different they will do for the person for whom they are making the coupons. They can decorate or color the cover.
 - **Suggested coupon ideas:** Hug, sing a song, feed a pet, prayer, share a toy, help sibling do a chore, take out trash, make bed, do a chore without being asked, do the dishes, shovel the driveway, help a friend with a chore or school work.
- **Research – “How Can I Write a Letter?”**
 - **Instructions:** Most of the New Testament was first written as letters to churches. Read the information on pages 122-123 of the Big Book of Bible Learning to the children so they can learn how letters were written in the days of the early church.

Introduction Lg. Group

Today we're going to talk about love. Remember we have learned that the Christians in Corinth had a lot of problems. One problem was that they were pretty selfish and unwilling to think about the needs of others. Paul wrote this letter to remind the people what God's love looks like. Jesus was the only man who ever loved perfectly. Follow along as I read about His birth from Luke 2:1-20 in the Bible. While you listen, think about why Jesus' birth is about God's love.

Transition

Let me read you something that was written by a person who imagined what Jesus might say to us if He was here.

Lesson Lg. Group

Instructions: Read adapted excerpt from "The Arrival." [1]

[1] Max Lucado, *God Came Near, Chronicles of Christ*, 1987, Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 97266, pp. 22, 23.

“God had entered the world as a baby.

“Yet, were someone to come to the sheep stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold.

“The stable stinks like all stables do. The stench of urine, dung, and sheep reeks strongly in the air. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse scurries across the dirt floor.

“A more lowly place of birth could not exist.

“Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps puzzled, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a choir of angels. God goes to those who have time to hear him - so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds.

“Near the young mother sits the weary father. If anyone is dozing, he is. He can't remember the last time he sat down. And now that the excitement has subsided a bit, now that Mary and the baby are comfortable, he leans against the wall of the stable and feels his eyes grow heavy. He still hasn't figured it all out. The mystery of this birth puzzles him. But he hasn't the energy to wrestle with the questions. What's important is that the baby is fine and that Mary is safe. As sleep comes he remembers the name the angel told him to use...Jesus.

“We will call him Jesus.”

“Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain of childbirth has been overshadowed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So this is he. She remembers the words of the angel. “His kingdom will never end”

“He looks like anything but a king. His face is wrinkled and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being.

“Royalty in the midst of the commonplace. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. God entering the world on the floor of a stable, through a young woman and in the presence of a carpenter.”

Let's discuss this experience. So, what do you think? Do you think Jesus gave up anything to come to this earth? What did Jesus give up?

Lesson Continued

When Jesus agreed to come to this earth He knew in advance how horrible His condition would be for over 30 years. He would be not be able to do all the things He could do in heaven. He is God. He came from the perfect environment of heaven to this world that is often gross, stinky and full of sin. He set aside the use of His divine power, which is slightly like us with our hands tied behind our backs. He gave up being everywhere all the time, which is slightly like us having our legs tied together. He gave up being able to see all things at all times, which is slightly like us being blind. He gave up the use of His privileges as the King of the Universe and His right to rule, which is slightly like having our mouths' taped shut. He gave up His perfect home and came to this earth, which is like the gross odor we smell now. This is doesn't make sense to us.

Would you be willing to give up your comfort & freedom to go to a place that is disgusting, where you would be rejected and mistreated for even 30 days? Our key verse today is, "This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). When we think of all Jesus sacrificed, what does this verse mean to you?

We have a hard time loving the people who love us, but what about the people who are hard for us to love? Why do you think Jesus made that sacrifice? Jesus loves everyone, even the people who hate Him. We can begin to learn how to love others the way Jesus loves us when we accept His love. Who can tell me how you do that? (Believe that I sin against God and people. I need forgiveness and Jesus died to pay for my sin. Ask that His death count for me so I am forgiven. Ask Him into my life.) It is a personal decision that each one of us must make for ourselves. When we ask Jesus into our lives we become Christians. The Holy Spirit then enters our lives and is ready to teach us, change us and empower us to love the way Jesus does.

Let's get into our small groups.

- How do you think Christ felt about giving up the use of his abilities and his home in heaven for 33 years? Do you think it was a difficult decision to make?
- Do you think He felt like loving us that way?
- Why do you think He made that sacrifice?
- Read Matthew 5:43-4. Would you be willing to give up everything and die for people who you know will hate you, reject you, laugh at you, beat you, spit at you and then kill you?! That is what Jesus did. He loved those who hated Him. He loves us even before we love Him. He even loves people who will never love Him. And He tells us that our lives will be better if we love the same way. Jesus said, "This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). But what Jesus did goes way over the top! This isn't even possible, don't you agree?

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Learning Activity#1 Continued

- Acts 20:35 says that our lives are more fulfilled when we serve others than when we are served. Do you think this is true? Are there some sacrifices you are willing to make for others because you love them? What?

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray and thank Jesus for choosing to love us so much that He came to earth to die for us. Let's pray that the Holy Spirit will teach us, change us and empower us to love others.