

Loving Others

Quarter 12 • Lesson 4

Focus on Spiritual Formation

1. *Connecting*: Go through an obstacle course with a partner.
2. *Teaching*: Hear about David and Jonathan and how to love others (1 Samuel 18—20; 1 John 4:7, 11; Matthew 5:43–44).
3. *Responding*: Talk about how to show love in situations, and choose to receive and give love this week.

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Scripts from the end of this lesson
- 2 rags or ropes about 1/2 meter long
- 2 or more cups
- Pitcher of water

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- Paper
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Before class, set up a simple obstacle course. You will want the children to go over things, under things, and around things.

Teacher Devotion

*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other
and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12

We know that we have been called to love others. But sometimes it is difficult to do. We may be busy or dealing with our own painful things in life. We may have a broken relationship with others. Or those other people may have hurt us in some way. How do we love when we do not feel like loving?

As this verse tells us, the Lord is the one who can make our love increase. Only as we receive His love deep in our hearts will we have any to give to others. And only as we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us will our hearts be so full of love that it overflows onto others. Spend some time praying and asking God to reveal His love for you. Ask Him to open your heart wide to receive fully from Him so that it will overflow to the children you teach.

Family Connection: Let families know that this week their children will learn about loving others. Encourage family members to show love for each other in practical ways this week.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Go through an obstacle course with a partner.

Welcome each child warmly as he arrives. Call him by name and give him a high five.

Divide the children into pairs. Show them the obstacle course and how to go through it. Explain that each pair will go through the obstacle course with their legs attached, as though they have 3 legs instead of 4.

Choose a pair to stand up and demonstrate. The 2 volunteers will stand shoulder to shoulder with their arms and legs touching. Use one of the rags to tie together their 2 legs that are touching. They will also link together their 2 arms that are touching. Have them practice walking in front of the class.

Have them start the obstacle course, and help the second pair get tied together. Once the first pair has gone through about half the obstacles, the second pair can start. When the first pair is finished, you can use that rag for the next pair. Send each pair through the obstacle course. They should use their 3 legs the whole time. Encourage children to talk with their partners and work together as a team.

Teacher Tip: If you have a large class, you can pick several pairs to go through the obstacle course while the others cheer for them.

- **Did you think this activity was difficult or easy? Why?**
- **What did you and your partner have to do to succeed?**

Today we will learn about what the Bible says about loving others.

2. Teaching: Hear about David and Jonathan and how to love others (1 Samuel 18—20; 1 John 4:7, 11; Matthew 5:43–44).

Today we will do a dramatic reading of a story from the Old Testament.

Pick children who are good readers to play King Saul, David, and Jonathan. You will be the narrator. Cut out the scripts at the end of this lesson and give a copy to each child playing a part. You will read from the copy here. Encourage the children to use a lot of expression with their voices and their bodies.

Teacher Tip: If none of your children are strong readers, you can read the script and have the children act while you read. Use different voices for each character to make it more interesting for the children.

A GOOD FRIEND

NARRATOR: Long ago a man named Saul was king of Israel. King Saul was tall, handsome, and proud. There was also a young man named David. He was not much older than some of you! David became famous when he killed the Philistine giant Goliath.

DAVID: Praise God! He helped me defeat Goliath, who mocked God. The Philistine army fled in fear. The Lord has given us victory!

KING SAUL: (*To David*) I am glad you defeated Goliath!

NARRATOR: King Saul had a son named Jonathan, who was to become king when his father died. Jonathan loved David as he loved himself. They became best friends.

JONATHAN: *(To David)* Today I make a covenant of brotherhood with you. Here, take my robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

David and Jonathan hug.

NARRATOR: King Saul did not allow David to return home but had David stay with him. David fought many battles for the king. One time, as David and King Saul returned home from battle, the Israelite women welcomed King Saul with singing and dancing. They sang, "Saul kills thousands of Philistines, but David kills tens of thousands!" This made King Saul very angry!

KING SAUL: How dare the women give David credit for killing more Philistines than I? Soon the people may try to give David my kingdom. I do not trust David. I will watch him closely.

NARRATOR: God was with David everywhere he went. As David became more successful in battle, King Saul became more jealous of him.

KING SAUL: I will send David to fight on the front lines against the mighty Philistine army. Surely David will die in battle! Then I will not have to worry about him taking over my kingdom!

NARRATOR: God was with David, and David did not die in battle. David's popularity among the people grew. King Saul became insane with jealousy and anger.

KING SAUL: *(To Jonathan)* I order you to kill David!

Jonathan goes to David.

JONATHAN: *(To David)* My father the king, wants you killed. I have a plan to make sure that you stay safe. I will talk to my father. In 3 days, hide behind the big rock in this field. I come here to shoot some arrows. I will bring a servant with me to pick them up. If King Saul no longer wants you killed, I will tell my servant that he can find the arrows on this side of the big rock. If King Saul still wants you killed, I will tell my servant that my arrows are on the other side of the big rock. Then you must run and hide. May the Lord be with you!

Jonathan goes to King Saul.

KING SAUL: *(To Jonathan)* Where is David? Why isn't he here with me? I know you have sided with David over me! Send someone to bring David to me, for he must die!

The child playing King Saul returns to his seat.

NARRATOR: Jonathan knew King Saul was still angry with David. He knew David had to run away and hide to stay safe. Jonathan returned to the field where David was hiding.

David crouches down as though hiding behind a rock. Jonathan pretends to shoot 3 arrows past David.

NARRATOR: Jonathan shot 3 arrows past David. David knew this meant his life was still in danger.

David stands up and walks to Jonathan. He bows down 3 times to Jonathan, and then they hug.

JONATHAN: *(To David)* Go in peace! I will always consider you my friend and love you like a brother.

David and Jonathan walk away from each other. Both children return to their seats.

Lead the class in clapping for the children who acted. Talk about the story with the children.

- **How would you describe King Saul?**
- **How would you describe Jonathan?**
- **Would you rather have Saul or Jonathan as a friend? Why?**

The Bible says in 1 Samuel 18:1 that Jonathan loved David “as himself.” Listen to these other verses that tell us how to love others:

Read 1 John 4:7, 11 from your Bible if possible. If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.
Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ...
Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*
1 John 4:7, 11

- **According to this verse, what should we do in response to God’s love?**

We can respond to God’s love for us by loving others with the love He has given us.

God heals our broken hearts and fills our cups with His love. Because of this, we can love others. David and Jonathan loved each other in this way. When someone loves you, it is easy to love that person back. It is as if you are both pouring water into each other’s cups. Let me read another verse about loving others:

Read Matthew 5:43–44, from your Bible if possible.

*You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.”
But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*
Matthew 5:43–44

- **Who do these verses say we should love?**
- **Do you think it is easy or difficult to love those who hate you? Why?**

We can only love those who are our enemies with God’s love and His strength. Remember this verse we read just a few minutes ago:

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
1 John 4:11

We can pour out our love on others because we have received God’s love.

3. Responding: Talk about how to show love in situations, and choose to receive and give love this week.

Listen as I read 2 stories to you. After each story, turn to your neighbour and share a way you could show the love of God to that person.

Story 1

A girl in your village limps because she was born with a lame foot. Many of the children call her names. You have chosen to be friends with this girl.

- How can you show God's love to her?

Allow children to share their ideas.

Story 2

You live next to a boy who bullies you. You try to avoid him, but whenever he sees you he calls you names and sometimes hits you.

- How can you show God's love to him?

Allow children to share their ideas.

Place the pitcher of water near you.

Remember how we learned that we can think about our hearts like cups. On our own, our cups are empty, but God wants to fill our cups with His perfect love.

Fill a cup with water from the pitcher for the children to see as you talk.

Last week we learned that a broken heart is like a cracked cup. It is hard to give and receive love when our hearts are broken. But God wants to heal our broken hearts and fill us with His love. When your cup is full, you can love others—even your enemies—the same way God loves you. Sometimes God even uses you to fill someone else's cup.

Have the children form a line. If you have a large class, have the children form 2 or 3 lines. Give the full cup of water to the first child in line. Give an empty cup to the next child in line.

God fills your cup with His love so that it overflows onto others. When your cup is filled with God's love, you can share it with others! And God's love never runs dry! Let's fill each other's cups as a symbol of sharing God's love with others.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, the children can complete their page as part of this response time.

Teacher Tip: If any of the children are not yet Christians, encourage them to still participate in this activity. They can think about what would keep them from receiving God's love. Make yourself available after class to talk with any children who have questions about receiving God's love or giving it to others.

The first person in line will carefully pour his water into the empty cup of the person behind him. As he pours, he will tell that person what he will do this week to share God's love with someone. The first person will then give his empty cup to the third person in line. The second child, who now has a full cup, will share how she will show God's love this week as she pours her water into the third person's cup. We will continue this way until everyone has received and given the water representing God's love. After your turn, return to your seat and wait quietly.

If any children spill water, dry it with a towel or rag and fill the cup again with water from the pitcher. As the cups near the end of the line, stand behind the last child so that he can pour his water into your empty cup.

When all of the children have received and given water, close class by speaking this blessing, based on Romans 12:10, over the class.

Blessing: May your cup overflow with God's love and spill out onto every person in your life this week! May you be devoted to one another in love.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "Mighty God" by Elevation Worship:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAhkYoWYxAY>