

# Let Us Love One Another

Grades  
**3-4**

**BELOVED • EASTER 5 • YEAR B**

**1 JOHN 4:7-21**



5

## 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

Love is an abstract concept. Kids this age need concrete examples to begin to understand it! Offer examples from your own life to help them see examples of love in their lives.



## GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers

## LESSON SUPPLIES

- Water pitcher
- Small cups

**WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL NRSV BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS**

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

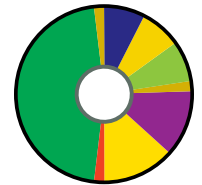
As soon as the second kid arrives, let them begin a game of "I Spy" that others can join as they come.

## Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon.

**Today we're continuing in the season of Easter!**

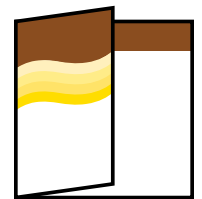
**What is your favorite thing about spring?** Have kids mark the chart by drawing a pair of binoculars. **Besides nature, where else can we look for God showing love to us?**



Kids have small paper cups filled from a common water pitcher labeled "Love." As they drink, say: **During Easter, we remember that we are God's beloved. We are brought together by love.**

## Pass out leaflets and markers.

**How do you know when you love something?** Listen to their responses. **What are some things you love the most? Draw them on your front flap.** These don't have to be toys or even possessions; people, pets, and places are all good examples too. **How do you show your love for what you've drawn?**



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

You don't have to tell us about it, but has everyone once had a hard time loving a friend? In today's video, Leo is going to face that exact problem.

View Episode 11, "Tough Love," on the Whirl Year B Spring Grades 3-6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **When have you felt like Leo?**
- **We've talked about things we love because we want to love them. Who or what do you love because you are supposed to love them?** Family, pets, or presents from relatives are all fair game here. **How is that kind of love different sometimes?**
- **How would you have responded to Ruby if you were Leo?**
- **Why is Leo having such a hard time loving Burt?**
- **How can he begin to love Burt again?**



## 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: Help set up today's theme, "Beloved," by reading aloud John 13:34 on page 1259. Show your group how to make a "hand heart": touch the tips of your thumbs together, pointed down to form the bottom of the heart. Then arch your pointer fingers, tips touching to form the top of the heart. Let kids try this on their own.



**Now make a heart with a friend: touch the tip of one kid's left hand with the tip of their friend's right hand.** Once they've got that down, kids circle up and take turns reading verses from today's reading, 1 John 4:7-21. **When you finish reading your verse, turn to the kid on your left. Hold half a heart with your right hand, so that kid can complete it with their right hand. The kid receiving the heart reads the next verse. Continue passing the heart until the reading is completed.**

### Ask these questions after you read the story:

- When is it hard for you to love someone?
- How do you feel loved by God?
- Why do you think God loves you? Do you feel like you have to *earn* God's love?
- How do other people have to earn *your* love? How is that like or not like God's love?
- How can your love be even more like God's love?

### BIBLE BIT

In John 15, the branches live because they are grafted to (abiding in) the vine. We are called to live (abide) in God's love.

### WATCH IT AGAIN

Pay attention to Ruby. Does she wait until she has all the answers before she tries to help Leo?

### OUR CHURCH

Find a concrete way your group can visibly show their love for your church, such as posting a sign in the hall or singing a song during worship.

# RESPOND 10

## Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Fold your square so you can only see the frame and banner.** Help kids fold under the edge of the square outside the picture frame.
2. **With your eyes closed, draw your own portrait in the frame.**
3. When they finish, have kids write their name in the banner below the frame and share the drawings. If you have a place to display pictures, consider quickly taking a picture of each kid with their self-portrait.
4. **Are you happy with your picture? Does it look like someone God would love?**
5. **What does someone who loves like God look like? How can you tell he or she loves like God?**
6. Read 1 John 4:13 again. Help kids understand the word *abide* by asking them what thing they like to talk about the most. That thing *abides* in them. **Can you let God's love abide in you?**
7. **Unfold your square. While I read 1 John 4:7-21 again, write words you think are about loving and abiding in God.** Help them identify phrases such as "love one another," "born of God," "confess Jesus," and "without fear."
8. **When has someone else reflected God's love to you?**

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

**What did you find out about love today?** Take time to hear kids' responses. **Remember this—you are God's beloved. God always loves you, no matter what. We can show that same "no matter what" love to everyone around us! We can love like God loves. What does being beloved look like? It looks like even more love.**

## Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers.

**Write the name or role of a beloved adult in your life.** Have kids sit in a circle. Pass the leaflets to the left, with everyone loudly reading the name they see until everyone has their own leaflet.

## Send kids out.

Return to the water pitcher labeled "Love." Pour water into cups. As kids drink, say: **During Easter, we remember that we are God's beloved. We are brought together by love.**

Pray together: **God, help us to always let your love flow through us so those around us can realize they are beloved too. Amen.**

Thank kids for being willing to share how they love others! Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.