

Let Us Love One Another

PreK-
K

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

There are many kinds of love. Remind kids that we all love each other, and that there is more to love than the mushy kind of love on TV. The love that is the focus of this lesson is the love we share because God loved us first.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Masking tape
- Crayons
- Construction paper (red, cut into large hearts)

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Bubble wands and solution
- Plastic tablecloth
- Plastic Easter egg
- Hula hoops (6)
- Beanbags

WHIRL SUPPLIES

• WHIRL STORY BIBLES

• DVD

• FLOOR MAT

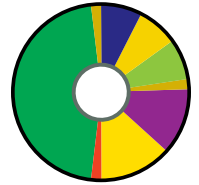
• LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Lay the tablecloth on the floor. Let kids use the bubble wands to blow bubbles. Try to keep them on the tablecloth. **God's love goes everywhere, just like our bubbles blow everywhere. You can't keep love in one place, and you can't keep bubbles in one place either.**

Invite kids to sit around the Floor Mat.

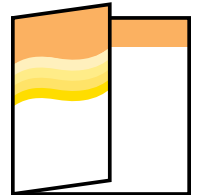
Point out the season (Easter), color (yellow), and icon (butterfly). **Our story today is about sharing God's love. Love starts with God. We show love to others because God loves us first. Love is an action! Our hearts remind us of love.** Invite kids to take turns touching their hearts with one hand and then touching the Easter section of the Floor Mat.



Form a circle and pass around an empty plastic Easter egg. **The empty egg reminds us of the empty tomb. Jesus is alive! When it's your turn to open the egg, say, "We love others because God loves us."**

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

We're going to spell a word today by following a path with our fingers. Start at the red heart. What's the first letter on the path? Write that letter in the first blank heart at the bottom. Let's work together to see what word we spell. Continue finding the letters



and writing them in the blank hearts. **We spelled the word LOVE. God loves us, so we love others.** Collect their leaflets until Respond.

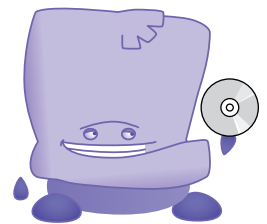
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The kids in the video go on a field trip today, but one kid gets left behind. Let's gather around to see how the other kids feel about that.

View Episode 11, "Nazareth Now," on the Whirl Year B Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What did Victor do to Jax in the beginning of the video?**
- **How do you think Jax felt when he fell on the tapioca pudding?**
- **What did the kids think about Victor not getting to go on the field trip?**
- **How did Jax show God's love to Victor, even though Victor played a trick on him?**
- **I wonder how Victor felt when Jax brought him a gift.**



Pass out Whirl Story Bibles to kids.

Let's find our story today! Help kids find "A Letter about God's Love" on page 510. Start by pointing out the graphic that shows the butterfly in the yellow circle for the Easter season. Before you read, invite kids to look for all the different people who are in the church home, sharing the letter.



Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How did the people hear about God's love?
- What did the letter say about God and God's love?
- Who do you send pictures, letters, and messages to? How do you send them?
- How do you feel when you get a message or letter?
- I wonder if we know people who need to hear more about God's love.

Play together!

Set the hula hoops on the floor with the red paper hearts in the center of some of them. Have kids stand in a large circle around the perimeter of the hula hoop arrangement. **The hearts remind us of God's love for us. We don't have to do anything to earn that special love. God loves us no matter what.** Invite kids to try to toss the beanbags into the hula hoops with hearts. Have kids step back to make the game more challenging, or have kids turn around and toss the beanbags over their shoulders. **What other ways could we toss the beanbags into the hula hoops?**

BIBLE BIT

- When Jesus teaches about love, he means both that we're to love one another *because* he loves us and that we're to love others the *same* way he loves us.

WATCH IT AGAIN

- **Let's watch the video again. This time let's look for how the kids show love to each other, and how the kids don't show love to each other.**

OUR CHURCH

- Invite someone from your church to talk about ways your church shares Jesus' love with people in your church community.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. Show kids how to fold the square in half using the existing vertical fold in the leaflet and in half again. This creates a center point that will help the leaflet spin. Unfold and look at the video characters. **Ada, Monty, Clara, and Victor have arrows pointing to different parts of their bodies. Let's spin our squares to figure them out.** (Ada: head; Monty: feet; Victor: heart; Clara: hands.)
2. **If you bring a can of soup to the food shelf, what body part are you using? Spin the leaflet around and put your elbow on the part of your leaflet that matches.**
3. **If you read a Bible story about God, which body part are you using? Spin the leaflet so that part is pointing at you.**
4. **What if you high-five a new kid in church or at school? High-five someone right now, spin your leaflet, and high-five that character.**
5. **When you talk with someone who is sad, what are you using? Spin the leaflet and trace a cross on that character.**
6. **If you hear someone crying and you say a prayer for them, what body part are you using? Spin, touch your heart, and then touch that character.**
7. **What about when you run for help for a hurt friend? Move your leaflet to touch your feet!**
8. **Let's think of ways to use our whole bodies to share God's love.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

God loved us first, and we are so filled with that love that we love others. God sent Jesus to show us how. How did you show love to others today? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Pass out leaflet panels.

When I say, "God's love is stronger than an . . .," touch the elephant and make muscle arms. When I say, "God's love is bigger than a . . .," touch the mountain and put your arms in a mountain shape. When I say, "God's love never ends," touch the hula hoop and draw a circle in the air.

Send kids out.

Pass the empty egg around the circle, saying, "**We love others because God loves us.**"

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for loving us. Help us love others the way you love us. Amen.**

Thank kids for the ways they showed love to one another today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.