

Love each other like the members of your family. (Romans 12:10a)

Love in Action – Romans 12:9-18

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: LOVE

In today's story, Paul explains what love should look like for both the church and others in the community. Paul calls for a sincere love without pretending. He says that we should hate evil and cling to what is good. We should love one another like family. We also should show honor to one another. Paul says we should be enthusiastic in serving the Lord. We are to find happiness in hope and stand our ground when we are in trouble.

Paul also addresses how to deal with people who are different from us. We are to bless people who harass us and not curse them, as Jesus taught. We are to treat one another as equals and not think of ourselves as better than anyone else. We are to befriend those who have no status and not have an inflated idea of our own intelligence. We are not to seek revenge on those who have wronged us, and we are to show respect for the beliefs of those who believe something different from us. Most importantly, we are to live in peace with everyone. We are called to love.

But love can be hard. It might seem impossible to demonstrate this kind of love. How can we possibly always be loving? This story shows many ways to love. We can't always show perfect love, but we can choose one way we will offer our very best love. Love is not about perfection. Love is a practice. Help children see ways they can practice being a person of love and how to share that love with others.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This week, pick one way you can show love. You do not have to be perfect at loving; you just have to try. Ask your friends and family to choose one way they can show love and share God's love with the world. Hold one another accountable. At the end of the week, share your experiences with one another.

Come Together

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: *Class Pack—pp. 16 & 17; Leader Guide—pp. 4, 85; Activity Sheets (Session 13); Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD; CD player; stickers or markers; items for Wonder Table (small table, green cloth, and items such as a candle, hearts); Wonder Box; heart; pens; pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Display the Attendance Chart (Class Pack—pp. 16 & 17). Set up a Wonder Table (see Leader—p. 4). Place the heart inside the Wonder Box. Set the Wonder Box on the Wonder Table.*

- Play “Celebrate Wonder” (CD) as the children arrive. Lyrics are on page 85 of the Leader Guide.
- Greet each child. Show the children where to mark the Attendance Chart using a sticker or a marker.
- Distribute this week’s Activity Sheet (Session 13). Have the children write messages, punch them out, and go as a group to place the messages around your church space.

Tip: *Get permission to place the messages in the church space.*

Sing and Celebrate

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 88, Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD or Celebrate Wonder DVD, CD player, DVD player, TV*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy “Song Sheet—Unit 3” for each child.*

- Gather the children around the Wonder Table, and hand out the Song Sheets.
- Play “A Strong Wind” (CD or DVD). Invite the children to sing and celebrate.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: *CEB Bible; Class Pack—pp. 8 & 25, 19; Celebrate Wonder DVD; TV; DVD player*

Prepare Ahead: *Obtain the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (pp. 8 & 25) and the Wonder Story Mat Figures (p. 19). You will use Romans 12:18 today.*

- Lay the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat on the floor.

- Read from the Bible today's story in Romans 12:9-18.
- Let a child move or place Romans 12:18 on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Watch the Session 13 video on the DVD.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack—insert, pp. 11 & 22; Wonder Box (containing a heart)

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Word poster (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 22), and locate the Wonder Cube (Class Pack—insert).

- Let a child roll the Wonder Cube. Direct the children to answer the question(s) about the Bible story. You can interact with the Wonder Cube as time allows.
- Then pick up the Wonder Box and place it in front of the children.

SAY: Today's faith word is *Love*: a closeness and connection that we feel with God and others.

- Wonder together:
 - How would you define love?
 - What does Paul tell us about love?
 - What do you think is inside our Wonder Box today?
- Open the Wonder Box and reveal the heart.

SAY: As Christians, we are called to be examples of love.

Experience Wonder

Match the Messages of Love (Game)

Supplies: CEB Bibles, Leader Guide—p. 84, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Match the Messages of Love" (Leader Guide—p. 84). Cut apart the messages, mix them up, and place them face-down in rows.

- Direct the children to sit in a circle on the floor.
- SAY:** Today we are learning about different ways to love.
- Have a child turn over a phrase. Then have the child turn over one more. If the phrases go together, the child keeps the strips. Look up Romans 12:9-18 for help.
 - Give each child a turn, and play the game until all the strips have been matched.

WONDER: Which part of the Bible story teaches you the most about love?

Words of Love (Reflective Writing)

Supplies: CEB Bibles, paper, pencils, crayons

SAY: Today's Bible story tells us many ways to love.

WONDER: How do you want to show love?

- Invite the children to reread Romans 12:9-18.
- Then have the children write or draw one way they want to show love.
- Encourage the children to think about one phrase that might define their understanding of love.
- Invite willing volunteers to share.

Grow Love (Service)

Supplies: seasonal flowers, gardening tools, gardening gloves, water

Prepare Ahead: Ask permission to plant flowers at your church. Locate a place to plant the flowers.

SAY: One way we show love is through service. We are going to plant some flowers. Flowers show the beauty of God's creation and bring joy and love to others.

WONDER: Have you ever planted flowers?

- Take the children outside to plant the flowers.
- Say a blessing over the flowers.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: suggested books: "Love" by Matt de la Peña and "Last Stop on Market Street" by Matt de la Peña; quiet items: different kinds of hearts, sticky notes (to write words of affirmations on), pens, pencils

- Locate the suggested books and quiet items, and place them in the Peaceful Place.
- Allow children who want or need a quieter activity to visit the Peaceful Place.

Tip: You may choose to include other quiet toys, books, or activities.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Love Through Service

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 89, “Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book” (optional)

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Celebration Chart” (Leader Guide) for children who have not received it yet.

- Gather the children in a circle near the Wonder Table.

SAY: Today’s Bible story reminds us of the importance of love.

- Invite the children to make a heart with their hands.
- Have them look through the heart.
- Then have the children repeat after you.

SAY: I see love all around me. Love is in you and love is in me.

- Repeat this practice several times.

SAY: Amen.

- Send “Celebration Chart” home with children who did not receive it yet.
- Encourage the children and their families to use the “Celebration Chart” and to read together the quarterly *Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased).

Love should be shown
without pretending.
Hate evil,
and hold on to what is good.
Love each other
like the members of your family.
Be the best at
showing honor to each other.
Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic—
be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord!
Be happy in your hope, stand your ground
when you're in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer.
Contribute to the needs of God's people,
and welcome strangers into your home.
Be happy with those who are happy,
and cry with those who are crying.
Consider everyone as equal,
and don't think that you're better than anyone else.
Show respect for
what everyone else believes is good.
If possible, to the best of your ability,
live at peace with all people.