



Date: _____
Series: Lookin' for a Leader
Summer Year 3, Lesson 11

Love God with All Your Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength

Primary Scripture: Mark 12:30

Key Verse: Mark 12:30, "So love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and all your strength."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Children hear much talk about love. For the most part, love is defined as a strong feeling of affection. Love can be much more than that. Love is giving oneself away. Children need to understand that God calls them to love him. They should place God in such high regard that they give themselves to him. Children can love God with their hearts (desires), souls (deepest thoughts and wills), mind (thinking processes), and strength (actions). Their power to love God first comes from his love given to us in Jesus.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: While we were unlovable, Jesus gave his life and all when he sacrificed himself for our sin.

Jesus in us: As we call upon Jesus in faith, he fills our lives with his love for us.

Jesus through us: Having been filled with the love of Jesus, not only can we love him back, but also love others as ourselves.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies needed: Valentine card or a gift wrapped box

Show the Valentine or gift box to the kids. Then have some children come forward and interview them on ways they show love to other people. Conclude that sometimes giving gifts or cards is a way we can show love to someone else. Then ask the following rhetorical questions. Don't allow kids to respond out loud, but have them reflect on the thoughts presented.

Today we will talk about what it means to love God with our whole person. How do we show love to God? Certainly we need to tell God that we love him, but is there more? How do we demonstrate our love for him? Our worship shows it. Worship is an important way to show God our love.

Read Mark 12:30:

"So love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

We can love God with our whole person. Our desires, our deepest thoughts, the way we think, and especially our actions –heart, soul, mind, and strength are part of loving God with our whole person.

Let's show God our love by thinking of him as we sing songs about him and to him.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Read 1 John 3:16:

“We understand what love is when we realize that Christ gave his life for us. That means we must give our lives for other believers.”

True love is when you give yourself for the benefit of another person. That is what Jesus did for us. Because of Jesus dying for us, we want to not only love God but also give ourselves to him. We want to love other people and give ourselves for their benefit as well. Let’s think about ways that maybe we have not loved God or others the way we should.

Let kids give some examples.

By forgiving our sins, God wants to change our lives to be filled with more love from him. Let’s ask his forgiveness and let his love fill us up so that we can better love him and others.

Have kids confess silently and then offer a prayer of forgiveness.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Supplies: a red paper heart

Place the heart in the offering basket.

Our offerings are an act of love to God. Thank you, Lord, for loving us first.

Talk about your current mission project and how close you are to reaching your goal. Then pray God’s blessing as kids bring their offerings forward.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies: For each group of five kids—a large sheet of newsprint, markers, masking tape, scissors, darts (If darts are too expensive or unavailable, thumbtacks can be taped to a ball)

Divide the children into groups of five. Have an older child from each group trace the outline of a younger child on the sheet of newsprint. The outline of the child can then be cut out and placed on the floor in a carpeted area.

Have the groups stand six feet away from their person cut out. Have them take turns gently tossing a dart at their paper person. It is best to have the children throw lofted underhand pitches. (If darts are too expensive or unavailable, thumbtacks can be taped to a ball.)

It may seem cruel to damage the paper person in such a way but it serves the learning illustration for later.

After ten to fifteen puncture wounds are made on the paper figures, gather the children back together in large group. Have each group bring their punctured silhouette figure.

Have an adult helper tape the puncture holes on the backside of one of the group's paper figures.

Read 1 John 4:9, 10 to explain the learning point of the game.

“God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him. This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the payment for our sins.”

This scripture describes that true love is God giving his Son, Jesus, so that we could live through him. Jesus was a sacrifice for our sins.

The puncture wounds in the paper figures are examples of sins in our lives. When we do things that are unloving to God or other people, it hurts us. Sin tears up our lives. If nothing was done, a person could be completely ripped apart.

How does God fix those hurts that happen from the unloving things that we do? He fixes our hurts by loving us and giving us Jesus. It is like taking masking tape and taping over the rips.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Hold up the taped paper figure. Refer to the Bible verse again. Talk about forgiveness and having life in Jesus.

Because of the love that healed our lives, we can be a whole person. We, too, can love God just as he loved us.

Show the back of the paper figure with the tape to show how God has healed us. Then place a large strip of masking tape in the area of the heart (front side). Write the word "heart" on the strip.

The Bible says that we are to love God with all of our heart. What does that mean? That means we love God with all of our desires. The heart is a place that we think of when we think of the things that we desire. Desires are things that we feel strongly about.

What are some of the things that you desire? Can you name something that you really, really, really want? Can you name something that you really, really, really like doing? That is a desire. A person that you really, really, really like being with is also a desire. There is nothing wrong with desires like this unless they become so important to us that we desire them more than we desire to honor and love God.

I really, really, really love playing soccer. My desire is to become one of the best soccer players. (If soccer is not your favorite hobby, insert whatever is of interest to you and expand by adding your goals.) Is there anything wrong with that? Of course not, but God wants to be more important to you than soccer (or insert your hobby) or another desire. I can love God with my heart by saying, "I love You, God, more than my desire to be the best soccer player (insert your hobby)."

Using a marker, write "more than being a soccer player (or insert your hobby)" on the paper person.

Application:

Then, have each group go to their area and write the phrase “more than... (examples of whatever they desire).” Have plenty of markers available so kids write as they talk about things they desire. After the children have had some time to write, gather them into large group again to find out some of their answers.

Next, place a piece of tape below the heart and label it “soul.”

The soul is the deepest part of us. It is where we have our deepest thoughts and where we make our choices. God says that we are to love him with all of heart and our soul. How do we love God with our soul?

Let’s think of choices we can make that show God how we love him with all of our soul. One choice could be to think about him at night when you are laying in bed. Another choice would be to ask God to use you to help others. Other choices would be to show kindness to someone who has no friends or choosing not to do something you know you should not do.

Let’s write some of the things we might choose to do to show God’s love.

Have kids label their silhouettes with, “I love God with my soul by . . .” Then return to large group to share samples of their answers.

We have talked about how God tells us to love him with all of our heart and our soul. Now let’s talk about loving God with our minds.

Place some tape on the head of the paper figure and label it “mind.”

We love God with our minds by learning about him and his plans for us. We do this when we read the Bible and think about what it says.

We can even learn to think about things the way God thinks about them.

Read 1 John 3:17-18:

“Now, suppose a person has enough to live on and notices another believer in need. How can God’s love be in that person if he doesn’t bother to help the other believer? Dear children, we must show love through actions that are sincere, not through empty words.”

This scripture encourages us to think about how we can share our possessions with others. Sharing is a way to show our love to God. We can also think about the good things of God – how he loves us,

how he is strong and mighty, and how he promises to always be with us. Let's label the head with thoughts that we have about God. Let's use the phrase "I can think about..."

Dismiss the children to fill in examples on the head of their person. Then have them return to share their responses.

We have talked about how we love God with all of our heart, our soul, and our mind. Now let's talk about how we love God with our strength. What are things we can do to show our love to God? Of course, we could love him when we use our bodies to sing or clap for him. We can also show our love for God with our strength by doing things to help others. What are some examples?

Anything that we do with our bodies to give glory to God is a way that we show our love to him. Let's write on our paper person "I can show love by doing..."

Have kids once again write examples of loving God with all their strength on their paper figures, writing words and phrases around the legs, hands and arms.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Encourage kids to share times in which they have seen God's love at work in any of the ways mentioned this morning.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- Valentine card or a present

Offering:

- red paper heart to be placed in offering basket

Learning Game:

For each group of five kids:

- large sheet of newsprint
- markers
- masking tape
- scissors
- darts (If darts are too expensive or unavailable, thumbtacks can be taped to a ball.)

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